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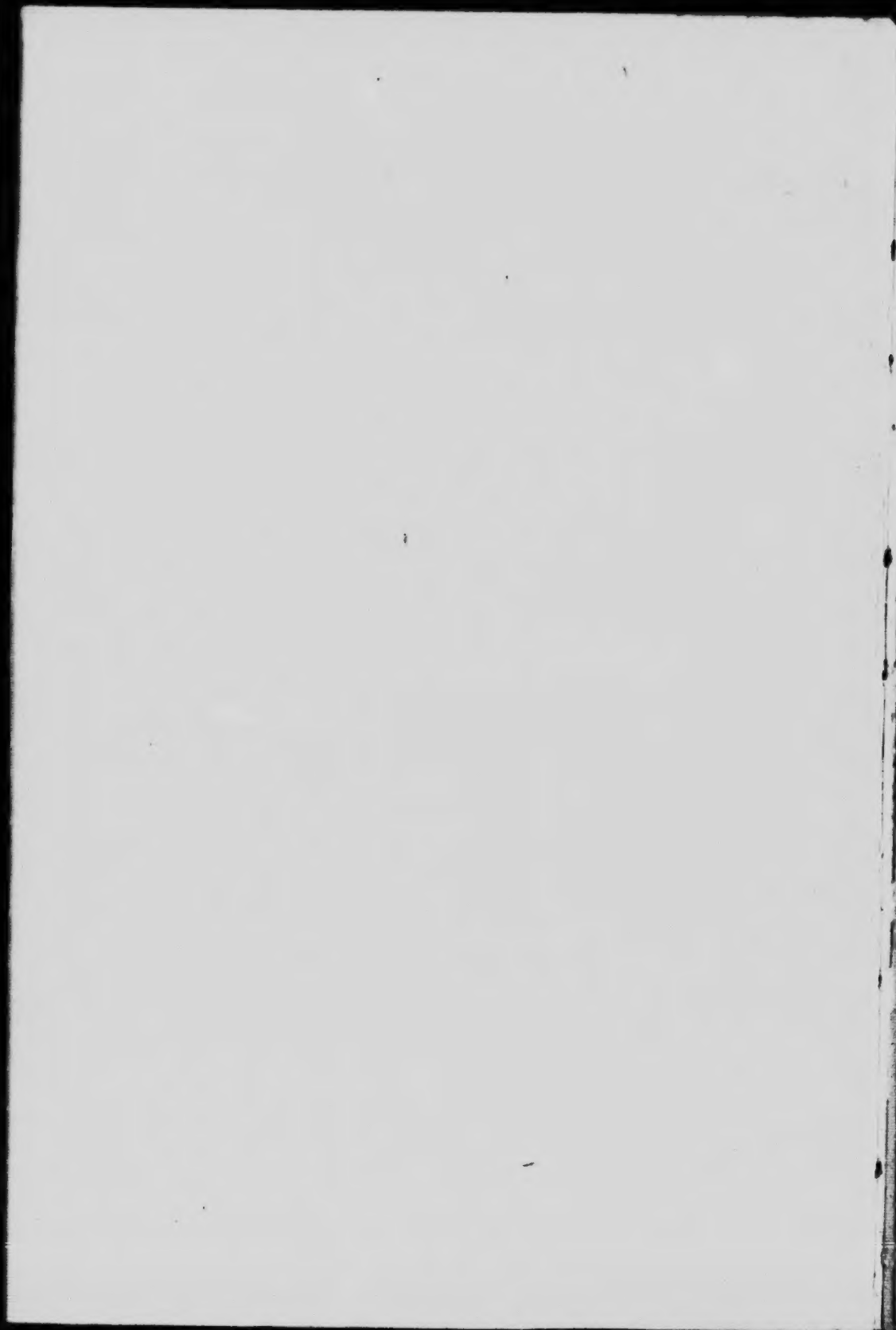
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# **The Divine Pursuit**



# The DIVINE PURSUIT

*"Surely goodness  
and mercy shall  
PURSUE me all the  
days of my life."*

BY

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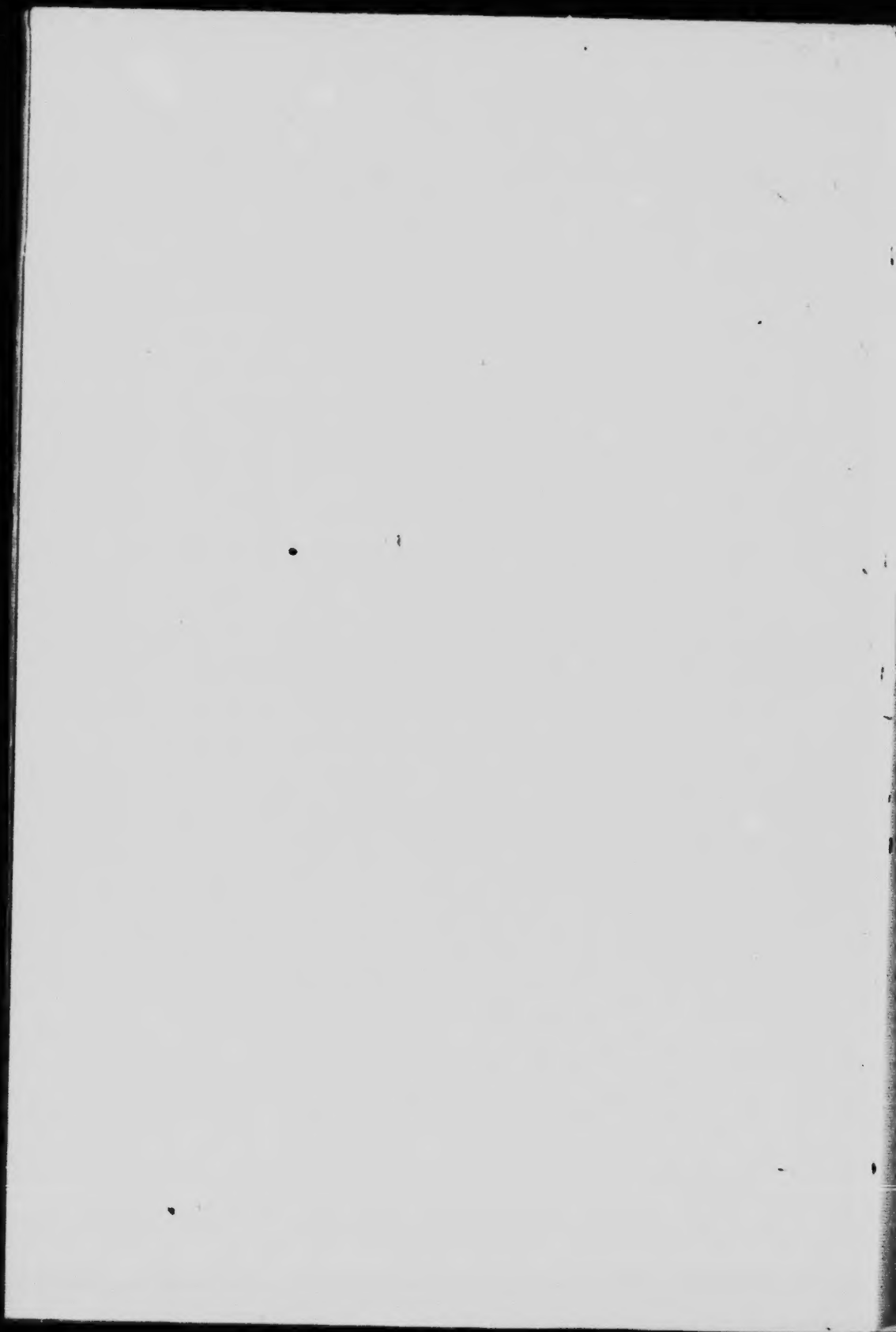
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TO  
MY MOTHER IN HEAVEN  
IN MEMORY OF  
THE GLAD FAITH, THE SWEET PATIENCE,  
AND THE UNWAVERING HOPE OF  
ALL HER EARTHLY DAYS



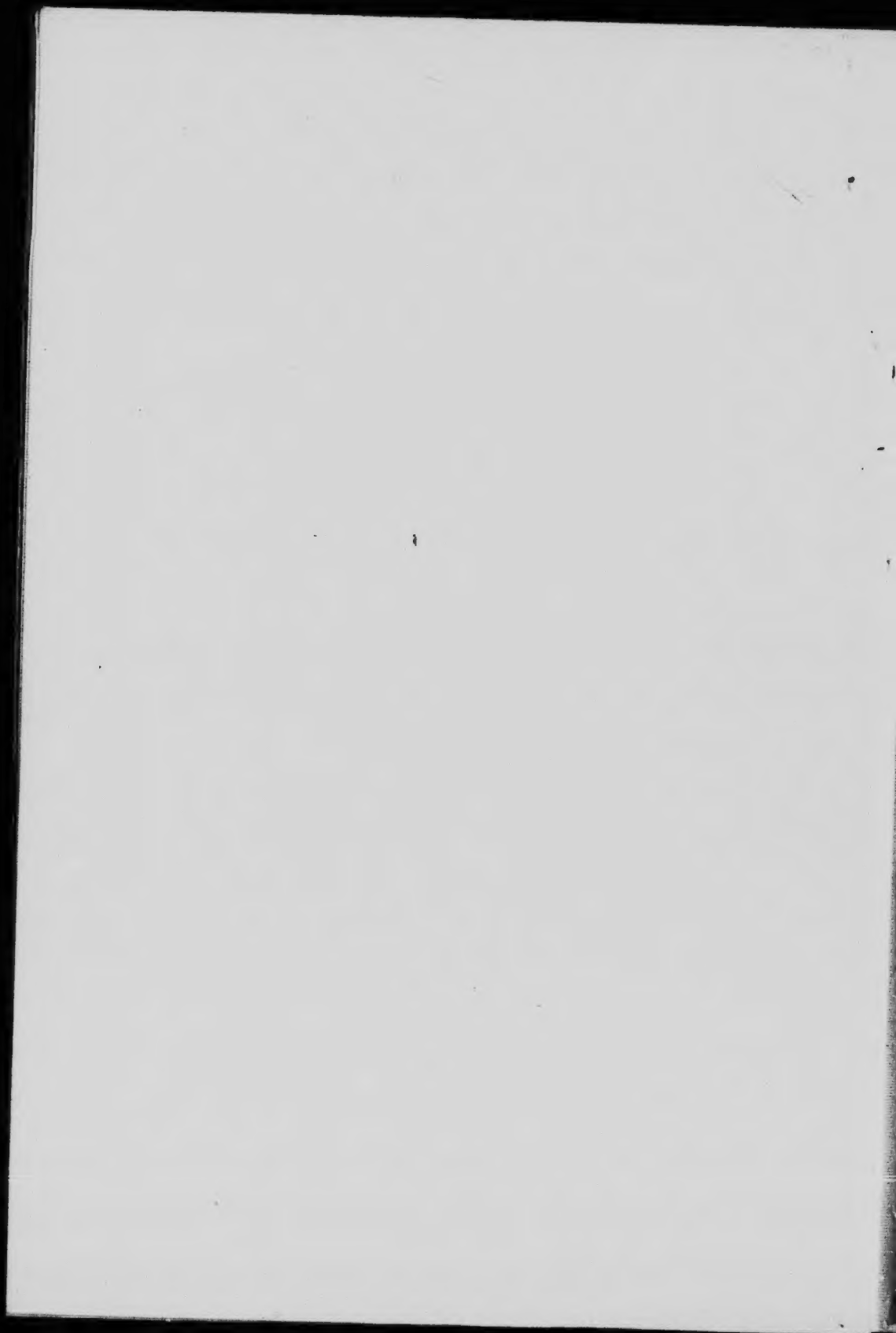


## Preface

This little group of meditations makes no pretence to any special coherence, other than that of a common relation to the spiritual life. Some, however, were originally written for special seasons of the Christian year; and adjacent meditations will sometimes be found to illustrate complementary truths. Some were suggested by exegetical study; others arose out of particular circumstances and experiences. But all alike are offered now, as they were originally, simply as devotional studies; and they are sent forth with the prayer that they may minister to the deeper life of those whom they may reach.

JOHN E. MCFADYEN.

TORONTO, May 1, 1901.



## Contents

	PAGE
THE TURNING OF THE MORNING . . . . .	17
THE SACRED PRESENT . . . . .	25
HE IS WORTHY . . . . .	31
THE WORTH OF A MAN . . . . .	41
THE RIVER OF GOD . . . . .	49
UNDER PONTIUS PILATE . . . . .	57
A VOICE FROM ANOTHER WORLD . . . . .	67
THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD . . . . .	75
THE SLEEP OF FAITH . . . . .	83
THE MIND OF CHRIST . . . . .	91
A NEW SONG . . . . .	99
ONE OF THESE . . . . .	109
WITH ALL THE SAINTS . . . . .	119
THE OPEN EYE . . . . .	129
THE UNKNOWN JESUS . . . . .	137
A TWELVE HOURS' DAY . . . . .	145
THE COMING NIGHT . . . . .	151
THE DESCENT OF JESUS . . . . .	157

## Contents

	PAGE
WHO AM I? . . . . .	165
THE DENIAL OF SELF . . . . .	173
ANOTHER COUNTRY . . . . .	181
SHATTERED FOUNDATIONS . . . . .	189
THE DIVINE PURSUIT . . . . .	197
THE TURNING OF THE EVENING . . . . .	203

**Almighty Father, who with untiring love dost watch over Thy children from one generation to another: amid all the changes of our earthly life Thou abidest. Graciously help us to abide in Thee, that evermore we may be steadfast and strong. For the light that never failed and the grace that never left us in the days gone by; for the visions that dispelled our doubt and the hopes that chastened our sorrow, we lift up our hearts to Thee in praise and joy. May the coming days be filled with a high sense of the sacredness of life and the value of time. With the dawning of each new day, shine on us with Thy face. Uplift our hearts by the thought of the glory of our calling in Christ and of the joy that is set before us in His service. May the numberless memories of Thy patient love deliver us from every crooked way, from every evil thought and imagination, that when all our days on earth are done we may be set before the presence of Thy glory without blemish in exceeding joy, through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

**AMEN.**



**"Jacob was left alone; and there  
wrestled a man with him till the rising  
of the dawn."**





## THE TURNING OF THE MORNING

How naturally dawn wakes thoughts of victory and God! In her swift, gentle, noiseless triumph over night, she is tremulous with His presence. It was "at the turning of the morning" that "the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea." And after a deliverance no less thrilling from a no less heartless foe, the Church of a later day sang:

"God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved.  
God helpeth her at the turning of the morning."

But behind the victory lies a struggle always fierce and often lonely in the gray dawn. "Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him till the rising of the dawn." Such a struggle in the dawn is the prophecy of a great and triumphant day.

Another year has risen, and we are left alone in another dawn. To each and to all the year will bring temptation, discipline, and

opportunity; it will test sincerity and strain faith. Can we look without flinching on the trials that some of its days may hurl against us? Every day, with its often unwelcome tasks, and unheeded blessings, will bring us face to face with God. Shall we see Him? Shall we be glad to look upon Him if we see Him? or shall we start back in terror or in anger at the awful Presence which in failure or in sorrow may cross our path? Be sure that into whatever experience we wander, He will be there before us; and we shall only face Him with quietness and confidence if we have wrestled with Him, with no less than a terrible earnestness, at the rising of the dawn.

The man who sees God in the dawn will see Him in the noonday; yea, and at eventide there will be light. The peace that is won in the lonely struggle with the unseen Stranger will possess the soul in the din and strife of the day. That day will be great into which God enters at the dawn; and the man who is not afraid to wrestle with his God in the gray and lonely morning will not be afraid of any pos-

## The Turning of the Morning 19

sible strife with his fellows. Only, the struggle whose crown is peace and victory must be strenuous and sincere. He is a bold man who would wrestle with God, and he must be in deadly earnest. But—oh, blessed mystery!—in this strange struggle man may conquer and wrest a blessing from Almighty God. How then shall he fear what the year may bring forth, who has striven with God and prevailed?

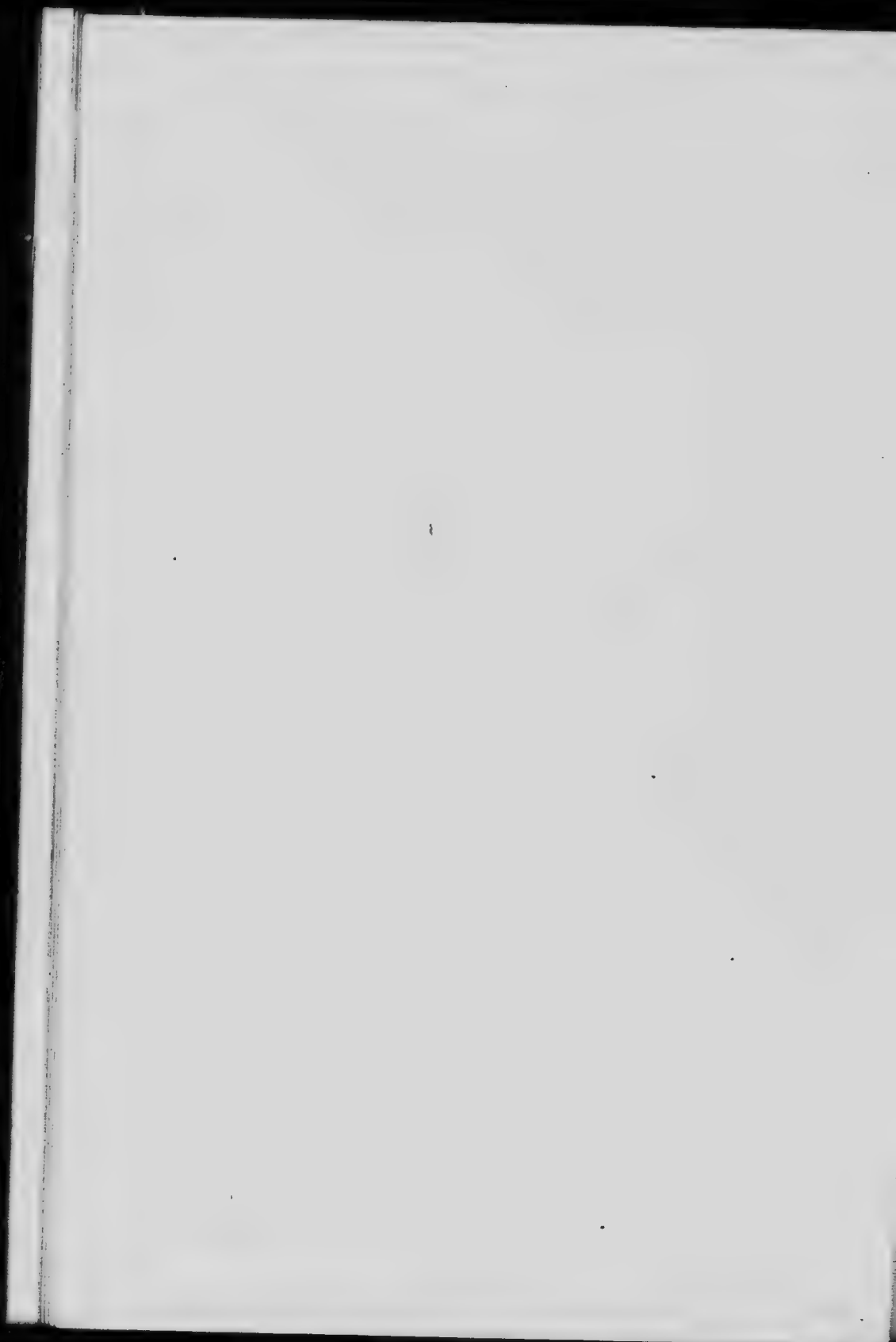
In the solemn mood which steals over every serious man at the opening of the year, God is struggling with him. Let him not decline the struggle. Let him face it humbly, yet boldly; for on the issue thereof, his year, his soul, depends. Or can it be that our hearts are so full of the world and so dull and irresponsible to heavenly solicitations that we have not yet felt that powerful, tender, unseen Presence at the breaking of the day? For surely with us, too, a man has been wrestling, even the man Christ Jesus. How long He will yet wrestle we do not know. Our day may be very short. Even if it be long, when the sun is in the heavens and the familiar task has begun again, He may

go away. He has been wrestling with our pessimism and striving to rebuke it by His vision of a Father to whom the least among us is of more value than many sparrows. He has been wrestling with our worldliness and sadly reminding us, who should have needed no reminder, that a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. He has been wrestling with our pride and seeking to touch our haughty hearts by the sight of Himself—in whom and through whom and to whom are all things—girt with a towel and washing His disciples' feet; for "I am among you as he that doth serve." He has been wrestling with our insincerity, seeking to put us to shame by likening us to foul platters and whited sepulchres. He has been wrestling with our shallow faith which will not grandly trust God for the morrow, reminding us that our heavenly Father knoweth that we have need of all these things. He has been wrestling with our procrastination which will not believe in the divineness of To-day, and seeking to rouse our slumbering energies by the

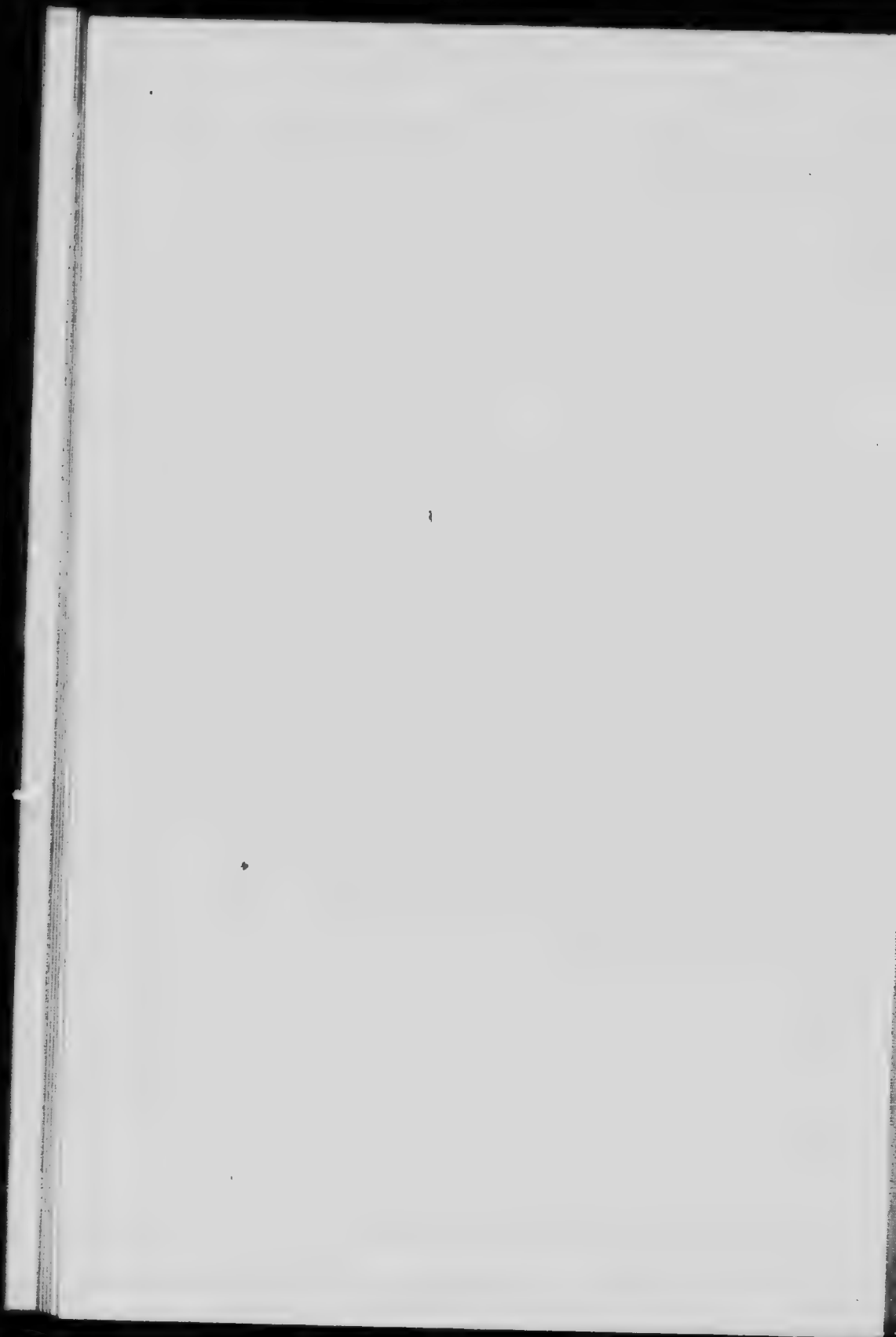
## The Turning of the Morning 21

prospect of a day when the door may be shut. He has been wrestling with our doubts of a land of light beyond the veil, and has come back to assure us with His, "Peace be unto you."

Oh, wretched man that I am! that so gracious a Spirit should wrestle with me, and I remain unblessed. Lord! Thou hast promised to be with me all the days. Say not, "Let me go, for the day breaketh." For I will not let Thee go unless Thou bless me. I know that not in anger, but in love, Thou dost wrestle with me. Thou dost wrestle that Thou mayest save. Bless me then, O Lord, with Thy grace, and help me at the turning of the morning. So shall I be with Thee all the day. Amen.



**"The place whereon thou standest is  
holy ground."**





## THE SACRED PRESENT

The mountain of God is just beyond the desert. Push far enough across the burning sands, like Moses at his lowly shepherd task in Midian, and you will come to a mountain, where sheep can find pasture and living men can see God. Nay, but is not God everywhere, the God of the waste where I am as well as of the hill to which I am going? Could we believe that, then it would not be a waste place for us any more; its loneliness would fill with holy presences, its silence ring with heavenly voices. And surely God is there. Many of His purest and bravest children He has thrust into a desert place, to brace them to a patient strength they could not learn amid the clamors and frivolities of the world, and to open their eyes to His calm and fair eternity. Not in the pomp of Egypt, but in the weird desolation of Midian, does he meet us with a vision of Himself.

Men owe more than they know to the discipline of the desert; it is there that they see "great sights," which touch the springs of faith and action. To every man it is given to walk in loneliness across a wilderness for days or months or years, the moisture sucked by the pitiless sun from the ground beneath his feet. Yet there in his desert he may see his God. He need not take another step; he has but to stand, and look, and listen; for any place whereon he can be standing, however shelterless or dreary, will be holy ground. That is what we need to know and feel, that we are traveling not only to God, but with Him, every step of every journey; that He is a present God, present in the burning, cheerless wilderness as well as on the hill, whose verdure and waters invite us. It is much to know that God is everywhere; but sharp grief or deep loneliness will only be satisfied with the vision of Him here. It is not so hard to cherish a vague faith that God besets us behind and before; harder it is to be sure that He is in the place whereon we are standing. 'Too often we

believe that God is anywhere but where we need Him, that is, where we are ourselves, with our broken hearts and hopes.

In his loneliness and hopelessness Moses had forgotten the sacredness of the present place and the present opportunity. He worshiped the God of the fathers, of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; despair had weakened his faith that he was also the God of their succeeding race. This brooding man, whose mind and heart were in the past, with hardly thought or hope for present or future, had to be brought back through fire to a true insight into the magnificence of the present, into a reanimating faith in the sacredness of the ground whereon he was standing. Did he long for God? There He was: not only in the long-lost land, not only in the far-off days which were but a half inspiring, half depressing memory, but here and now in the place whereon he was standing. A sorry enough place it was—wild, dreary, staring desert; the deadly silence broken only at night by the growl of a wild beast; here and there a stunted bush; nowhere any sign of

life or hope. Yet out of the stunted bush start the vision and voice of God; the present is kindled with the glory of fire.

So into weary men and women, tired of the present, looking with indifference, if not despair, to the future, and back to the past with wistfulness, this ancient message will again put heart, that the place whereon they are standing is holy ground; that the present, sad and barren as it seems, is yet the home of God, contains a revelation of Him, a vision of Him, a word from Him; that the present, lonely as it seems, is relieved and illumined by the presence of the God who graciously reveals Himself in fire to faithful men in quiet hours and desert places; and resplendent with the presence of the risen Christ, who said, "Behold, I am with you all the days till the end of the world," and then we shall behold Him face to face.

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“They, when they came to Jesus,  
besought him earnestly, saying ‘He is  
worthy that thou shouldest do this for  
him.’”



## HE IS WORTHY

He was only a foreign soldier's servant; but he was dear to his master, and he lay dying. Something in the Jewish people had won his master's heart; most of all had the oft-told tale of Jesus' healing love touched him to a strange sure faith in the Healer. So he sends to Jesus; would he come and heal his servant? And as we look upon the frank brave face, whose noble brow is fretted with anxious care for the man he loves, the words of the envoys find a willing echo in our hearts, "He is worthy that thou shouldest do this for him."

No man who reads his own heart aright would count himself worthy. A Jacob knows that he is not worthy of the least of all the mercies of his God. A Baptist confesses himself unworthy even to stoop and loose the Master's sandal. This captain of a hundred men counts it too high an honor to have Jesus stand

beneath his roof. But if any man may deem another worthy, surely it is this soldier heart, with its passion of love for a suffering servant, its generosity of affection for an alien and despised people, its miracle of clear-sighted faith in the yet unseen, and all but unknown Jesus.

But there is another Captain of many a hundred men; and He too is worthy. When He says "go," and we go, however humble the errand or narrow the way, we shall not go far till we find that the way on which He has sent us, is the way to heaven. When He bids us do this, and we do it, there hangs about the deed we do, be it never so lowly, the halo of eternity. For it is done for Him; and He is worthy and He liveth for evermore. His service transmutes the commonest life into something more precious than gold, yea than fine gold; even into beauty immortal, ineffable.

Forever, then, with the Lord, who comes without ceasing in every needy brother, in every call of duty, in every household care! Life cannot surely then be less than divinely



great to one who finds in all its claims a call to the service of Him who is worthy. In our cramped experience we pine for nobler opportunity; yet we stumble and fall over the opportunities that the common duties of every day lay at our feet. We reserve ourselves for great occasions, forgetting that every occasion is great into which we allow Jesus to enter; that every house is blessed beneath whose roof He stands.

Why do we keep our lives so dark by closing our eyes to the heavenly splendor that is playing upon them? Every act might gleam with a gracious Presence; for has it not been given us to do by One who is worthy? Life would leap forth with glad bounds towards the untroubled joy that is set before it, did we thrill to the sense of the holy privilege that is ours in His service.

There comes a claim upon our strength and sympathy. The work is not directly ours; such is the answer we make to our hearts. It breaks with rude voice into the too crowded monotony of our days. We see in it an inter-

ruption instead of an opportunity. We will not turn aside. Or if we listen and help and heal, it is with a sullen grudge against the unkind thing that has turned us from the straight and selfish way on which we fain had trodden. For such unlovely service there can be no amaranthine crown. The task was hard perchance; there was no form nor comeliness about it that we should desire it. But He is worthy, for whom thou shouldest do this.

Or perhaps our work is honest and good. Perhaps we are workmen who need not to be ashamed. With trembling, yet with confidence, we can fling it open to the searching eyes of the Masterbuilder; for it is our bravest and best. Yet we may be too haughtily careless of the feelings and prejudices of the brethren and sisters, for whom our work is done. Has needless offence been given by us and do we not care? We have been faithful in the great things, and are stubborn and angry because men have been offended by our inattention to things that we deem trivial. Do we

well to be angry? For nothing is trivial; least of all, anything that prejudices a man's real influence. A man of apostolic power can be all things to all men. He will be vexed if even his trivial things have given offence; and with humility and self-control, he will set himself to be "perfect and entire, wanting nothing." For is not his work the service of Another? And *He* is worthy for whom thou shouldest do this.

He is worthy. In this strange sense of a Presence that followeth all our way, lies the gracious stimulus to render of our best to God, the world, and ourselves, till all our work is done. The work may be lowly, unhonored, unguessed, unseen of others. So small a service may seem hardly worth while. But it is service of Him, and He is worthy.

And those for whom we spend ourselves may return our kindness with slander, or worse. They "were tortured, they were slain with the sword; being destitute, afflicted, tormented." And of them it is written that the world was not worthy. The tragedy of all service is that

it is so often offered to the unworthy. But worthy or unworthy as those may be, for whom we live and suffer and to whom we give our best, He is worthy; and with that we may be well content.

He is worthy for whom *thou* shouldest do this. The tongue of the unlearned and ignorant man may well sing for joy, as he sees how his life too may be caught up into the heavens by the rushing mighty wind of enthusiasm for One who is worthy. The poorest and the plainest, when they lay their gifts upon the altar of service, will find them not only consecrated, but transfigured.

Thou shouldest do *this*. So we need not search the heavens or the depths for opportunity of service. It comes unsought to every living man. Every hour it stands knocking at the door. It is the Master in disguise. To the unsealed eyes the lowliest act fills with a presence, as suddenly before the astonished disciples in the simply furnished upper room the Saviour of mankind appeared. In every opportunity the Master is calling for thee. If the

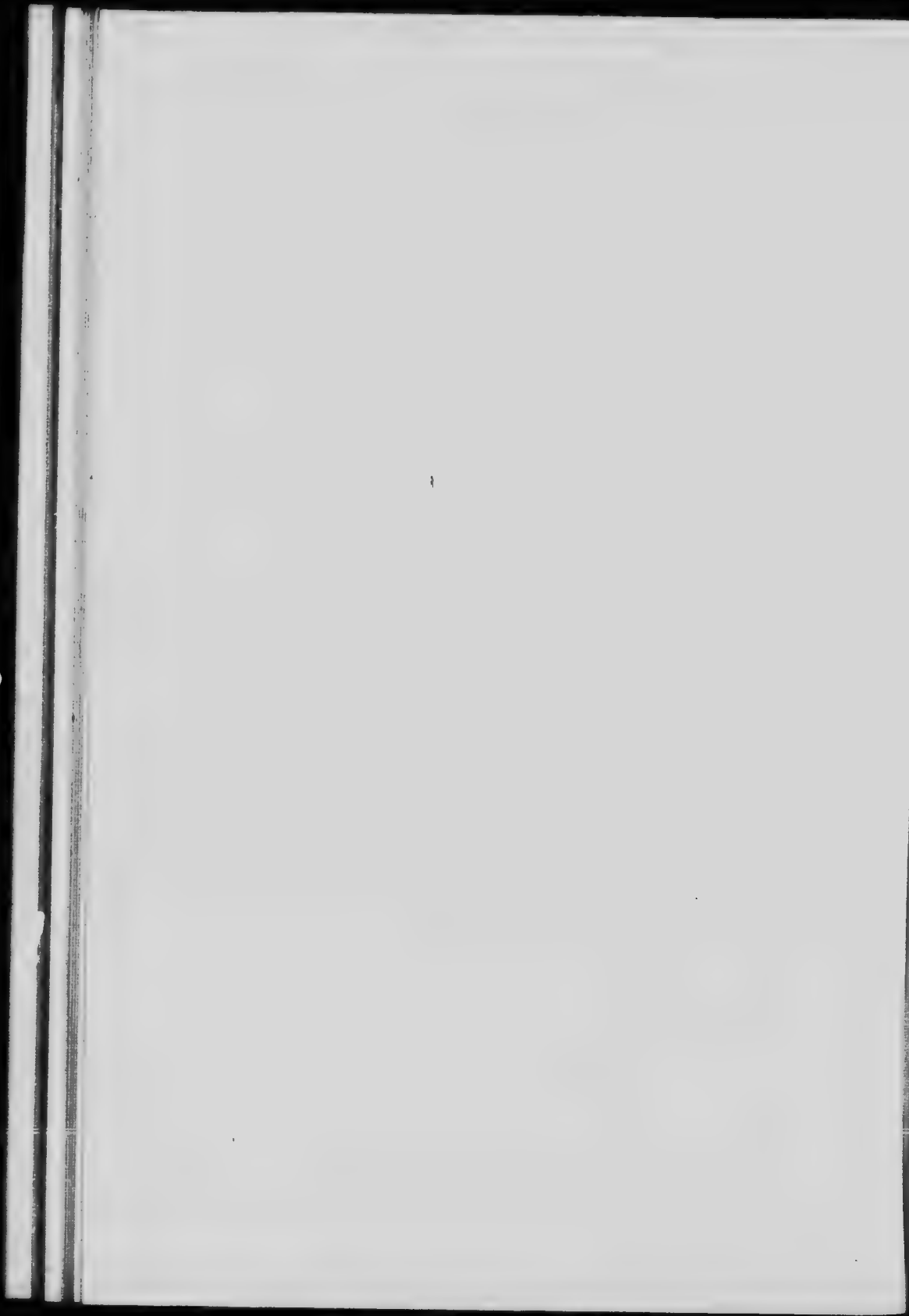
thing is worth doing, it is worth doing well, passing well; for He is worthy.

Not only in this world of effort but in that quiet land where they shall not hunger nor thirst nor struggle any more, will the presence of Him who is worthy, kindle the soul to rapture. For with the many angels round about the throne we shall sing with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honor, and glory, and blessing."



**"The wicked are like the chaff which  
the wind driveth away.**

**"Therefore the wicked shall not stand  
in the judgment."**





## THE WORTH OF A MAN

A man is worth what he is, not what he has; and that is true both of this world and of that which is to come. While he lives he may win and lose everything but one—his own personality. That is always his; ultimately it is all that is his. In that lies his worth, if he have any; not in the abundance of the things which he possesses and can lose. And when he dies he loses what he has, but he remains what he is. He who is unjust will be unjust still; he who is holy will be holy still; but he who is wealthy will be wealthy no more. It is a painful tribute to the commercialism of our age that a rich man is said to be worth so much when he dies. If he is worth no more than what he left he is worth nothing; and in the other world which, with all his foresight, he has forgotten or ignored, he will start a bankrupt, if he start at all. Or will he not rather

be too weak to start on this new, strange journey, too weak even to stand; able only to vanish like the chaff which the judgment wind of God drives to and fro—his withered soul shriveling up before the fierce heat of God's judgment fire? All the gold of all the mines will not purchase him peace or pardon, or redeem him from the fate of those who have trifled away their gifts or opportunities.

Worth so much! to whom? Who was the better for what he was worth? Society? Was he himself the better for it, or was he only the richer? Could he face the silence? Could he see the Unseen? Did his presence lighten any darkness, cheer any loneliness? Was any heart the sorer for his passing? Was "his soul well knit, and all his battles won"? Unless there was some divine idea in him, which he represented and incarnated, unless he was a worthy man, unless, that is, there was something in him we could worship—for worship is tribute to worth—he was worth nothing, though he had billions.

Will there ever come a day, we sometimes

ask, when men will get what they deserve? The dreamers of dreams comfort us with the vision of a world to come in the distant days, when inner worth will be fairly measured, and fitly rewarded with its due share of the world's good things, its honor, fame and gold. Is that God's way? Not always have the benefactors of religion won their \$5,000 a year. Many of the greatest of them were roasted alive, had their tongues slit, and their heads hacked off; "others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment; they were stoned, they were sawn asunder." Great poets have received for little poems a blank check, to be filled in as avarice prompted; and greater poets have received for lasting work the indifference, even the scorn, of their own generation. Great painters have received thousands for devoting their genius to trivial and unworthy . . . es; and greater painters have given the world their finest work for nothing. There may be some world, where worth and wages correspond, and the genius is the millionaire; but it is not

ours. Fools have been made emperors, and cowards generals; knaves have presided over the administration of justice, and traditionalists over schools of learning and religion. Folly and wickedness have reaped wealth and power and fame. While philosophers have been laughed at; philanthropists have been mobbed; explorers have lost their lives in swamps and snows; inventors have been ridiculed; reformers have been pilloried; apostles have been beaten with rods, stoned, shipwrecked, "in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren, in hunger and thirst, in fastings, in cold and nakedness." "Often," says St. Paul. Yet worth is worth, as God is God. "It cannot be valued with the fine gold of Ophir," nor need it be; for every man has what he deserves just in being what he is. A true man's native power, his goodness, his worth, is his dearest satisfaction; he craves no more than the privilege of exercising the gift that is in him, of doing his work and being

## The Worth of a Man

45

himself. Let us see that our hearts and minds are set upon the unseen things, which alone will stand the shock of death and the ruin of worlds.



**"There is a river, the streams whereof  
make glad the city of God."**





## THE RIVER OF GOD

The great lyric, which we call the forty-sixth Psalm, presents us with magnificent confusions, and with a no less magnificent order. First, a world in ruins; the earth dislodged from the pillars on which she rests, the mountains torn up by their roots and flung into the heart of the sea, the sea itself raging and foaming, its proud swelling shaking the very mountains; sea and land have left the bounds appointed for them, and have crossed into each other's domain; in all nature, nothing but confusion confounded. Then comes a confusion worse confounded. Instead of angry nature, there are cruel, threatening men; instead of foaming seas there is the roar of nations, foaming out their warlike fury against Jehovah and His people; instead of mountains hurled into the sea, there is the blustering of worldly kingdoms. They come to the fray

with cruel weapons of war—bow, spear, shield, chariot—armed with deadly hate and pride. Was it any wonder that in the midst of such turmoil Israel should feel in distress? Will such a proud sea not sweep away everything which it overwhelms? But there is a river whose streams can make glad, as well as a sea whose waters can devastate.

Israel stands firm in a world where everything else is in flux: stands, because her confidence is in Jehovah. Though distressed, she is not in despair: so far from being in despair that she looks out to the future with the sublimest confidence. "We will not fear." The God whose grace has saved her from these furious floods can save her from anything. "Jehovah sat as King at the flood; yea, Jehovah sitteth as King forever." So "we will not fear," not even though the mountains that are round about Jerusalem—mountains whose fixity another Psalmist took as the symbol of the security Jehovah was to his people—be torn up and hurled across the plain into the depths of the great sea. Whence came this

brave paean of joy? Was it not from the certainty of God's grace, the certainty that "there was a river whose streams made glad the city of God"?

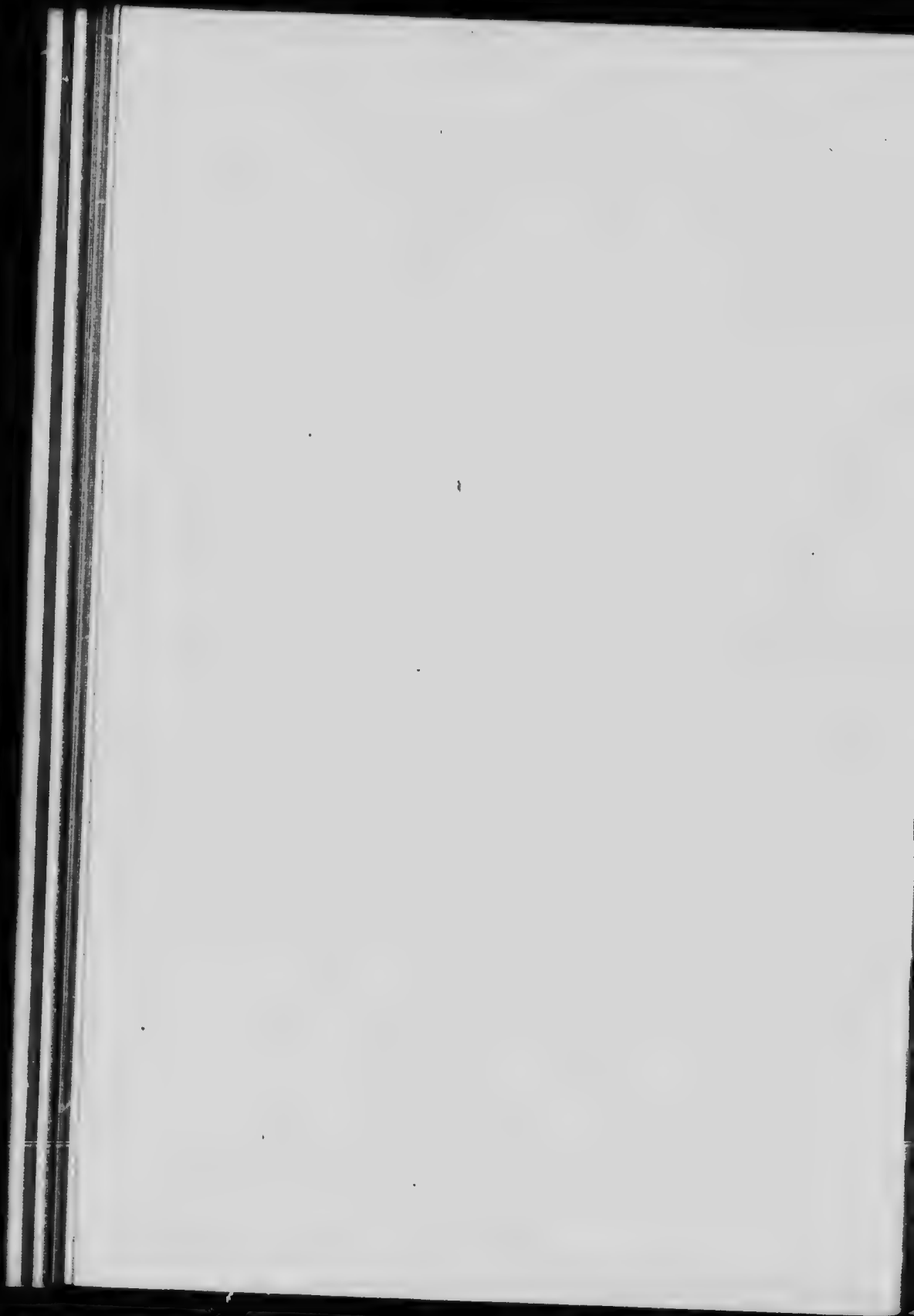
The beauty and the insight of this verse are not truly felt till we realize how destitute the Holy City was of everything that could have given birth to such a thought. In the words of a German traveler, "While other famous cities owe their power to natural conditions, such as commanding sites on seas and rivers, Jerusalem is distinguished precisely by the absence of all such natural advantages. She stands there alone in the wilderness, built on hard, rocky soil, with no rich pastures, with hardly a field, without a river—indeed with hardly a spring—far from the great paths of commerce. She is what she is, without a peer, only through the divine revelation of which she was the scene."

This riverless city has become the city "without a peer" because of her unseen river, the river of the grace of God, the river of the water of life. The desert, with its

monotony and dreariness, was never far away. Rocks and bare hills stare at you everywhere. Through the dusty city ran no refreshing streams—none but one, the river of the God who was in the midst of her; a stream that could only be seen by the eye of faith, a very powerful faith, for there was nothing in the landscape to suggest it. But if there was nothing in the landscape, there was in the history—in the recent deliverance. For the song is supposed to be a triumphal ode on the deliverance of Jerusalem from Sennacherib and his Assyrians. The river of God that flowed all unseen through the town had saved it from destruction. Those who had eyes to see it, and who were refreshed by the breezes that blew from it, feared not though the mountains plunged into the sea. Mountains might reel; but the people were safe so long as the river was there. That was the pledge that the night was already far spent, and God would help them "at the turning of the morning."

Oh, the joy of the eyes which see the sights that they saw! That, in the dreary, dusty city

—under siege, it may be—within whose walls is so much pain and misery, and on whose streets walk anxiety and sorrow, yet see through it all the silver line of the river of God. It is from the far days of the world's infancy that the tale has come down to us of a beautiful garden with trees many and fair, and a river flowing through it. The time of cities was not yet: and when they came, they brought so much siege and weariness that it was the fewest who could see God's river there. But the river is there, and one day—how far away we know not—river and city will alike be fair. Every gate of the city will be a precious stone, and in the midst of the street thereof will be the river of the water of life, and there shall be no curse any more.



**"I believe in Jesus Christ, His only  
Son our Lord, who was conceived by  
the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin  
Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate."**





## UNDER PONTIUS PILATE

One generation passeth away and another generation cometh, but two names will be remembered as long as the world lasts. Every Sabbath day, as the Christian Church confesses her faith in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, she is reminded of Mary, the Hebrew mother who bore Him, and Pilate, the Roman governor who crucified Him. We cannot look upon the Holy Trinity without seeing the faces of these two mortals who have won so strange an immortality through their relationship to Jesus, who was born of the one and suffered under the other.

"Suffered under Pontius Pilate." Hideous pre-eminence among the sons of men! Heaven and hell are round about the Savior. Mary on the right, the Virgin Mary; Pilate on the left, Pontius Pilate, under whom He suffered; and

Jesus in the midst. What a trinity! And those on either side are immortal as Jesus. There stands Pilate before us, if only for a moment every Sabbath day. Into the stately worship he glides like a lost soul from out of a world of wailing and lamentation, as if he hated his own immortality and besought us to forget him. But he lives on and on; for Christ "suffered under Pontius Pilate," and the Church must remember her Lord's suffering, as she remembers His love. Oh Pilate! with the haggard face and restless eyes: face troubled with the thought that some son of the gods stands before thee, and it is thine awful privilege to decide his fate: eyes strained with fear upon the visions that thy wife saw in the dream that troubled her by night. Oh Pilate! with the bloody hands. Thou hast slain a righteous man, a man whom thine own Roman heart knew and confessed to be righteous. Thou didst call for water: but thou shalt never, never, never wash thy hands clean. See! they are red to-day as ever after all these centuries. And Christ's Church is smitten

with wonder and horror and pity, as she looks at thee; for her Lord suffered under thee.

Behold the man! covered with nineteen centuries of shame, the scorn and the pity of every generation. The shame of other men has been buried in kindly oblivion, but his lives on. Every seventh day till the end of time he will be remembered in every land which names the name of Christ, by old men and little children, as Pontius Pilate, the man under whom the Lord of glory suffered.

But is the crime so rare which has made his memory so hateful? The accident of office has given him his fearful title to immortality. Had we been in the governor's place, might we not as easily have earned his infamous immortality? He was but false to the best that he knew; and, if that be his sin, who will cast the first stone? He rejected the Christ who stood before him; have we never rejected the Christ who speaks in our heart? And which is the more awful? for Pilate to condemn Him, with the howls of a threatening mob ringing in his ears,

and the mysterious majesty of his prisoner not known to be the effulgence of God's own glory; or for us to spurn Him who know of a surety that He is Lord of all, and who confess with our lips that He will one day judge the quick and the dead? If Pilate was afraid when he heard that Jesus had made Himself the Son of God, surely we too may tremble; for His resurrection, His present power and triumphs among us, persuade us that He is in truth the Son of God. To reject such a voice when it speaks within us and pleads with us to be brave, is to insult the gracious majesty of God and to imperil our eternity. The lonely distinction which the creed has given to Pilate is not so lonely after all. Every man who has ever played the coward, betrayed the highest, refused the noblest, chosen the basest, may fairly take his place by the side of the governor, and then what a great and marvelous fellowship there will be! They will come from the east and the west, from the north and the south: some with brazen brows, others with tear-stained faces;

and they will throng around Pilate, every man and woman and child since the world began, and they will perforce own him as king, not because his wickedness is greater than theirs, but because he spoke the word which nailed Christ to His cross.

There is that within us all which might have given us Pilate's place in the creed, had we but had his opportunity. His judgment was not at fault; his stern Roman sense of justice forced him to a right decision. But he lacked the courage of his convictions, and are we better than he? It is not hard to judge fairly about Christ; with honest men only one judgment is possible. But it is hard to deal fairly with Him. Rather than do that, men are prepared to risk an eternity of infamy. Pilate found no fault with this Man: and then he scourged Him. Strange logic, strange but not rare. We find no fault with the Man, and we scourge Him too: in the apathy with which we serve Him, in the infrequency with which we think of Him, in our indifference to the sin which grieves Him, in our neglect of those for

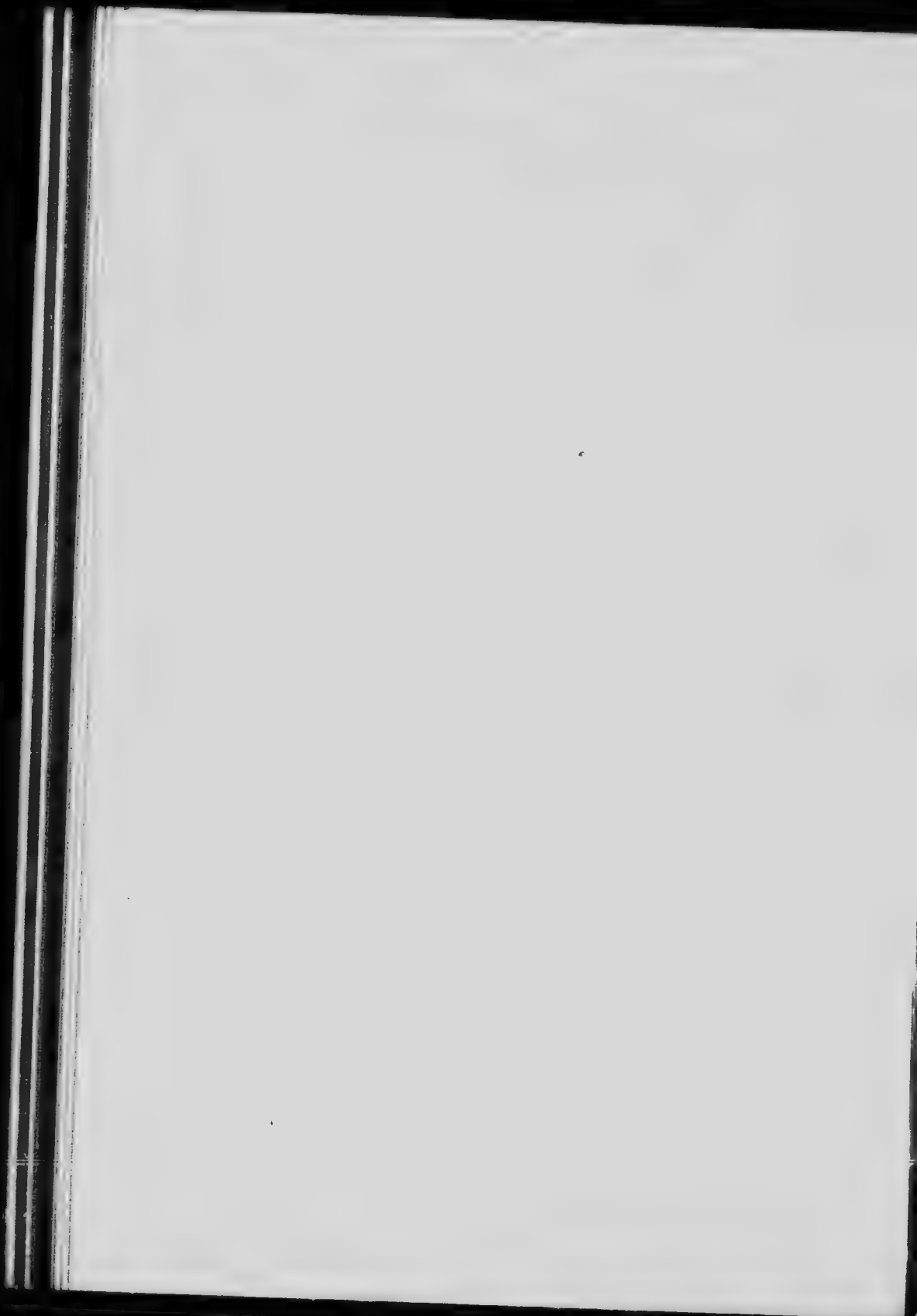
whom He died. Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, suffered under *us*. If the Church knew us as well as she knows Pilate, would she not shrink from us too in horror?

"Thou art not Caesar's friend," shouted the mob, "if thou release this man." And "wishing to content the multitude he delivered up Jesus to be crucified." To Pilate was committed the perilous honor of deciding the earthly fate of Jesus. Angels, men, and devils were looking on, as Hebrew righteousness stood for sentence before Roman might. And Pilate fell. He could not face the loss of influence or popularity. But Caesar has left him, and the cruel, howling mob has left him to bear his shame in the creed all these centuries alone; and what will they do for him in the great day when he stands for judgment before the Christ who once stood before him? Infamy on earth, shame and confusion at the judgment and throughout the ages: that is too dear a price to pay for the impotent friendship of emperor and people.

## Under Pontius Pilate

63

When Christ stands before us in some duty or some choice, we may, like Pilate, reject Him: but in rejecting Him, we decide not His fate but our own. "Suffered under Pontius Pilate." That dirge has rung throughout the ages, and followed him like an immortal curse. "Suffered under me." Unheard on earth, save by my own conscience, that cry is pealing throughout the courts of heaven, and will condemn me at the last.





**"When it was evening, on that day,  
the first day of the week, and when the  
doors were shut where the disciples  
were, Jesus came and stood in the  
midst and saith unto them, 'Peace be  
unto you.'"**



## A VOICE FROM ANOTHER WORLD

Why art thou cast down, O my soul? Is not this the Easter morning? And why art thou disquieted within me? For now is Christ risen from the dead. Hope thou in Him.

If I can but believe with all my heart that my Lord, whom cruel hands nailed long ago to a tree, is not now sleeping an eternal sleep in his lone Syrian grave, but is indeed alive and triumphant for evermore, I may look with quietness on sorrow and death, and forget my grief in the light of immortality. What is all our disquiet but want of faith in the eternal world, where all the worth that earth has ever seen abides? And, as we gaze upon our risen Lord, who could not be holden of death, do not our hearts fill with a great faith in the world beyond, as the realest of all realities? Time bears all its sons away; so that without this solemn faith in the sureness of another world

—a faith which nowhere becomes a certainty except in Him who rose from the dead—the contemplation of life would move us to inexpressible sadness. Could any thought be sadder than that the past was dead, and would never live again—all the brave life and high hope lost in thick night, vanished into a silence that has never been broken?

Never but once: and that once in a voice of wondrous grace, and by a figure of more than earthly glory. The figure was that of Jesus the Christ, with the nail prints yet clear upon His hands; and the voice said: "Peace." Almost any voice from within so thick a veil would have been welcome; it would have borne to us the assurance that the dear dead, whom we had watched with struggling hope till we had to say the stern good-bye, still were, however shadowy and joyless their life might be. But that the only voice which ever rang across from their world to ours should utter a word of peace! What balm to tired and restless hearts! In the grateful stillness of this Easter day, let us listen: and, borne across the Sab-

bath breeze into the world of our unrest from a world which too seldom haunts our imagination and a Saviour whose words have too little power over us, comes the soothing sound of peace. Do you not hear it? "Jesus came" out of the invisible world "and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, 'Peace be unto you.' " Are you not glad? And will you not praise Him, who is the health of your countenance? The unfulfilled promise and the baffled effort of the past are not dead: they have only gone up higher to the quiet land, where they will know the power of an endless life.

On the dawn of the first Easter morning a weeping woman stood beside a grave. And on the evening of that day, within closed doors, a band of sorrowful men met together with fear in their hearts, "fear of the Jews." The woman was weeping, and the men were sad because they had lost Jesus. He had gone away, and He had not come back again. And their hearts were sore, and their hopes were dead. But "Jesus came." Out of the awful silence into which men thought they had put

him forever, He came. Came into the garden and said, "Mary"; and a wild joy filled her heart: "I have seen the Lord." Came again at the close of the day to the forlorn and terrified band, and said: "Peace be unto you." This was not merely the familiar greeting of friend to friend—though it was that—in that strange moment when two worlds met. Nor was it merely a kindly word—though that it was, too—to pacify their terror, as this apparition from another world stood silently and suddenly before them. It was a word of larger, more majestic scope. Spoken to men who had met in fear, and who looked forward to troubled days, it had a wondrous power to soothe, coming from the lips of the Lord, fresh from His victory over death. "The disciples, therefore, were glad when they saw the Lord," glad with a great gladness which we cannot know till we have fathomed the depths of their sorrow and despair as they saw Jesus taken from His cross and laid in Joseph's tomb. Jesus is strangely earnest about this peace. Those worn, hunted men need it; and

## A Voice from Another World 71

He will not leave them till He has made them sure of it. "Jesus, therefore, said to them *again*, 'Peace be unto you.' "

The vision of the risen Christ, with a message of peace upon His lips, turned the disciples' terror into gladness, and still to-day are that vision and that message mighty to save from any grief or fear that frets us. To all who face sorrow, defeat, bereavement, death, the Easter voice says, "Peace be unto you"—a voice from a world wherein these things have all been swallowed up in victory.

Why art thou then cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God the Father and in Jesus Christ His Son, who is the first-fruits of them that have fallen asleep.





**"Where the Spirit of the Lord is,  
there is liberty."**



## THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD

In every art the master is free. He can create and control. Rules do not determine him; precedents do not bind him. Where the spirit of the master is, there is liberty. He breaks old laws and makes new ones. He even dispenses with laws, not because he despises them, but because he is a law unto himself. The law is in his heart, and he expresses it as he will. His fingers move across the organ keys, and he fills the listening air with forms, now soft as the moonlight, now wild as the storm. They are born, not of rule, but of the spirit.

And as in art, so in life. Where the Spirit of the Master is, there is liberty. Yet who enjoys it? Are we not the veriest slaves, bound by our past and our parentage, our habits and our sins, our education and our society? From behind the thick walls and the barred windows

we look out upon a world of moving life and beauty. But we cannot reach it: for we have not the Spirit of the Lord. Let that Spirit but stir within the heart of any prisoner, and the walls, be they never so thick, and the bars, be they never so heavy, will vanish as before the breath of God, and he shall be out in the open again, with the blue above him, and the spacious kindly earth around him, free to move whithersoever the Spirit leads him. For the Spirit is sure to carry him somewhere, not impossibly into yet untrodden paths, not improbably among wild beasts. But he will walk and not be afraid; for he is led of the Spirit, and the Spirit knows.

The world with its social and international problems, the Church with her perplexities of creed and organization, need now and ever men filled with the Spirit. Men there are, enough and to spare, of the letter: men who cannot take a brave step forward unless they see the footprints of a bolder than they. Not by such are the new heavens and the new earth ushered in. The world is lifted and

moved by the men of the Spirit, for they alone enjoy the freedom under which progress is possible. They strike a blow as the world needs and the Spirit bids, and do not tremble though their blow should be the first; some blow must be first. Meaner natures hide behind convention; will do nothing which cannot be supported by precedent. Free men create precedent, and thereby show the deepest respect of all for the past. To them the past is not an incubus but an inspiration. All that is best in it was created by men who looked at life and Scripture with their own eyes and reached their own conclusions; and we do them the deepest of all wrongs when we look or try to look through their eyes and abide or try to abide by their conclusions. All that is permanent in the work of the fathers is the spirit in which it was done. Their institutions and results are not final for us any more than are ours for the man of the aftertime. The free man would neither bind nor be bound.

Difficulties and doubts demand originality, and that only the man of the Spirit possesses.

He cannot be commonplace, even if he would; the Spirit will not let him. He sees problems, many and hard enough, in Church and State; learns for their solution all that the past can teach, and trusts for the rest to the Spirit within him. "If ye are led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law." Christ was beside Himself; so said His own kin. He had a devil; so said the leaders of the Church. And all because His methods were not conventional; all because He was free, obeying the impulse of the mighty Spirit within. So the men of the Spirit have often been branded as fools and heretics by a world which they turned upside down—small wonder!—and oftentimes they have had to fight single handed with their back against the wall, not counting their life or their reputation dear to them, if only they were privileged to do what they could for a thankless generation, and to testify to the might and immortal presence of the Spirit, who strengthened their heart when hosts encamped against them.

Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is lib-

erty. Liberty, but not license; for liberty is only possible within law. The free man is only free to act in the Spirit of the Lord, to move within the world of hopes and energies created by Him. But what a world! For *all things* are yours, and ye are Christ's. If liberty is law, yet law is liberty. The heart made free by the indwelling presence of Christ will express her emotions, her hopes, her faiths, in language which may send a thrill of astonishment through the conventional religious world. There is so much unreality everywhere that the world will always marvel, as it did of old, when it hears the voice of one who speaks with authority, and not as the scribes; and it may seek to silence such a voice by ridicule, by excommunication, by the cross, according to the temper of the age. But till it is silenced the speaker must speak, and the thinker must think, and the fighter must fight; for the Spirit must fulfil itself. On the face of dark and troubled waters the Spirit moves; moves because it must. The Spirit—for wind and spirit are alike in the Greek—the Spirit *blow-*

*eth.* And to men, stifled in the atmosphere of precedent and prejudice, welcome are the breezes that blow from the Alpine heights of some strong nature in whom the Spirit dwells. The Spirit bloweth *where it listeth*, not in the wake of some other spirit, but where it will; for it is original and free. Jesus breathed His Spirit upon twelve unheard-of men: and ancient faiths crumbled at their touch. He breathed upon a German miner's son: an old church tottered, and a new world burst into being. If He breathe upon us, may we not do things as great as these?



**"He giveth unto his beloved in sleep."**



## THE SLEEP OF FAITH

Faith without work is vain; faith without rest is impossible. The long day tries the sweetest patience, strains the strongest nerves. Then come the hours of quiet and rest, when men may look up to God and renew their strength. The sunshine may tempt a vigorous worker to self-reliance. Even though under the shadow of a great trust, the worker begins to feel sure of himself, as he sees the work growing beneath his hands. Yet no worker is safe until he is also sure of God: and that sureness he learns in the silence, when the day is done. As he lifts up his eyes from his work to the stars, the peace of the stars comes back upon him, and soothes him into deep thoughts of eternity. God's gifts are not over when the sun sinks in the west. Into the silence that follows He continues to pour them; for "He giveth to His beloved *in sleep*."

In sleep. What means then the cruel haste, with which we rush across our little life and wear our strength and fret our hearts away? What means this great unrest with which all our life is smitten, and which threatens not to let us go till it destroys us? On almost every face are lines that tell of a strain too sore. Where have those faces gone, those quiet, other-worldly faces, that look so gently upon us from the portraits of the middle ages, as if in sad and silent pity at the foolish haste which hides from us the eternal peace? All the world is busy: never has more work been done than to-day. And yet there is much that we cannot do. With our splendid gains have gone tragic losses. We have lost the desire, almost the power, to read aloud round the family hearth, lost the love of loneliness, lost the delight in pastures green and waters of quietness, lost the faith which can rest and wait patiently in the stillness to hear what God the Lord will say. Thomas à Kempis would look strangely out of place among us; but not more strange than we should look in the rest

that remaineth, if we have never had a fore-taste of it here.

We are gaining the world and losing our soul. How can we hope to possess the great God, unless we first possess ourselves? and how can we possess ourselves unless we come apart for a little while from the work which is draining our life-blood, and sit down in a desert place alone with our own hearts and God? All work is vain that is not inspired by a vision and sustained by a strength won in quiet hours. "It is vain for you that ye rise up early, and so late sit down to the evening meal." Vain: for it is costing you strength which you are not renewing. Vain, too: for the nervous eagerness to work so hard in the sunshine and so deep into the night, looks as if you thought too highly of the work of your own hands, and had forgotten that there is Another who watches over you and your work with loving eyes, One who works with you, and works evermore, who slumbers not nor sleeps. The hours in which you rest the weary hand and the jaded brain are not to be

counted as lost. They may bless you more than the struggle and toil of the day: for "He giveth to His beloved in sleep." The faith which would be strong must learn to fold her hands and bend her knees as well as ply her tools; she must sit with Mary as well as serve with Martha.

We read in a Psalm of an ancient church worn by her own feverish restlessness. She has a great impelling faith in God: the house which she is building is probably God's house, and the city which she is watching, the Holy City. No idle church is she: she believes in working out her own salvation. There is a fierce, almost relentless, persistency about her enthusiasm. She spares no effort to compass the good end: lengthens her day of toil, shortens her night of rest. You can see the busy workmen on the walls, and listen to the steady tramp of the watchmen as they go their rounds. You can hear the stroke of the hammer, and mark the eager strain of the watchmen's eyes. The building rises visibly every day: for the work goes on in hot haste, from

early morning till late evening. A noble church! with enthusiasm, energy, industry, devotion. Yet she has to learn that energy can only be sustained by meditation and repose, that the building of walls and the watching of cities can only be safely left to men who know how weak they are, and how sorely they need the help of the Unseen. She has so much faith in herself that she too easily forgets that it is God that worketh. Her builders are so busy and their tools make such a din that they cannot hear the voice of God; her walls are rising so high that they are shutting out the heavens. She must put down her tools, hasten home earlier to the evening meal, give herself over to restful household joys, take quiet rest and sleep: and there she will build by the grace of God what she could not build in the bustle of the day—self-knowledge, patient strength, faith in the power that haunts the silences. He giveth to His beloved in sleep. For such workers that is the one thing needful: they must learn to come home earlier, and spend the closing hours of the day

in undistracted peace, leaving the walls and the city to God.

The modern church no less than the ancient, and all men and women who love their souls, need to take to heart the admonition of the Psalmist. Life is rushing, as it never rushed before. In all directions walls are rising, watchmen are watching, effort is being expended, money is being squandered, strength is being wasted, lives are being laid down. But "it is vain for you": you make progress in every direction but one—in that one which is the condition of all progress: the power to stand back from the crowd, and enter into possession of your own soul; the delight in solitude, in brooding, in repose, in "sleep." It is there that His beloved win their best gifts, and build their stateliest walls; it is there that they see visions and dream dreams. For it is there, in the stillness, that they learn at once the importance and the unimportance of their own effort: it is there that they win that self-control, that steadiness of hand and of purpose which they need when they go out to build the city or the temple walls.

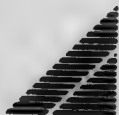
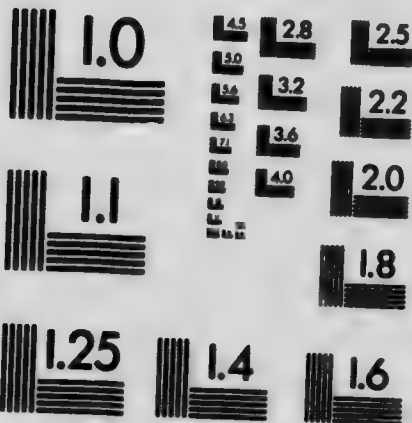


**"Have this mind in you, which was  
also in Christ Jesus."**



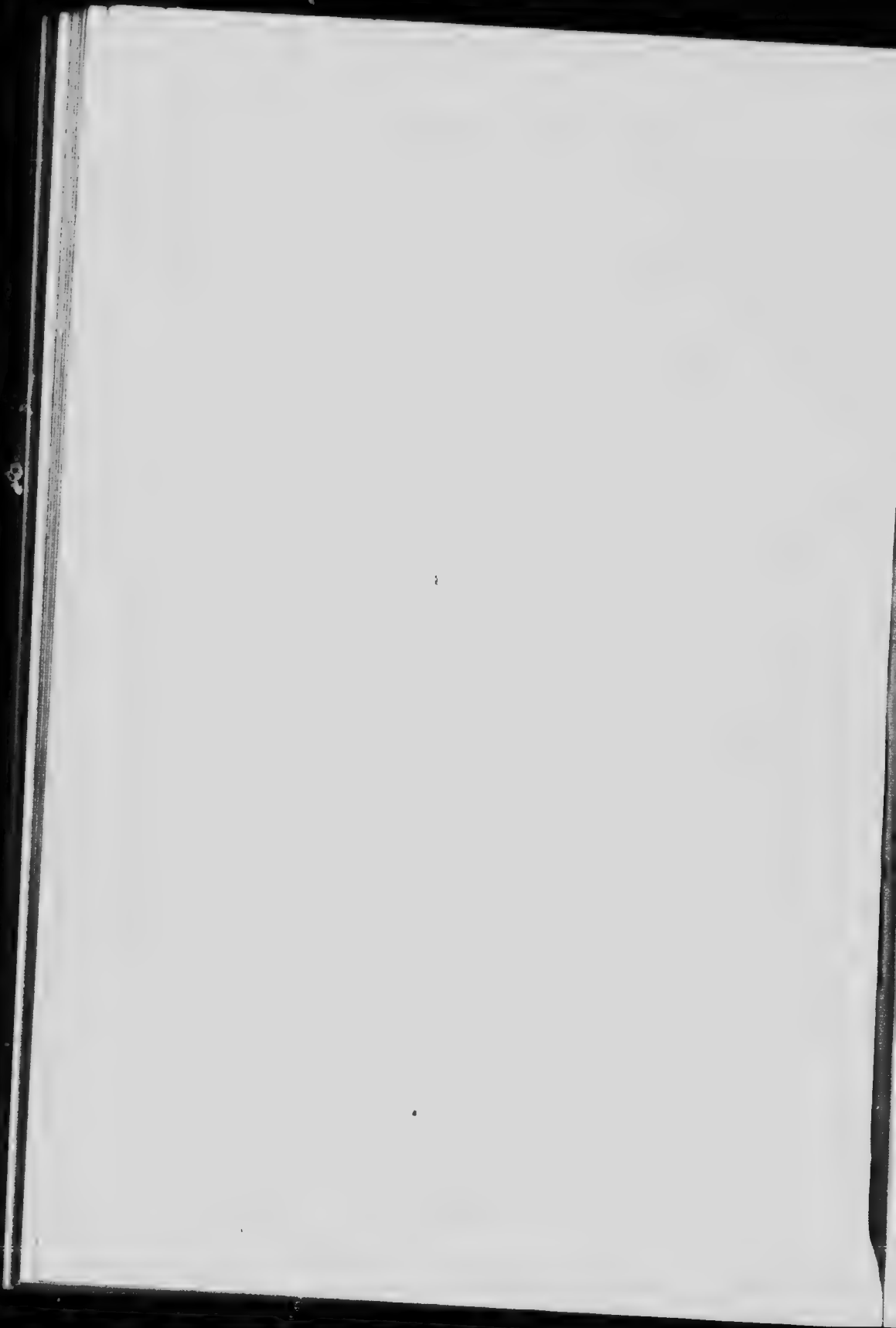
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## THE MIND OF CHRIST

"Have this mind in you," urged the apostle, "which was also in Christ Jesus." What an appeal! We sink in despair under the weight of its magnificence. Oh, wretched man that I am, mock not my weakness with such a dream of the impossible. The mind of Christ Jesus within me! Such a mind as His in such an one as I! It may not be. The apostle summons me to a height too steep for me, for any man. Were it not enough that I should follow afar off in the footsteps of Jesus, speak His words of grace, and do His deeds of love, so far as in my weakness I may, in lowly imitation of my unapproachable Lord? What He did, that I will seek to do. I will study the story of His life, with eager eye for all that I can make my own, and with a half wistful regret that there is so much into which I cannot follow Him. I am not led into the wilder-

ness with its wild beasts. I am not without a place to lay my head. I am not brought like a lamb to the slaughter. Since, then, there is so much of His that can never be mine, I have all the more need to touch His life where He touches mine, and take that as the goal of all my striving. It is hard to live in these days with the Lord so far away, and with no final word of His for so many of the cares that perplex me. Had I lived then or were He living now, how much more possible to be like Him! His every deed and word would stand out clear to copy; the brightness of His example would illumine all my way.

To argue thus is to mistake the nature of our calling. It is the glory of our religion that there is so little in the life of our Lord we can directly imitate. His outer life we can never live again. Our world is not His world; new needs and problems confront us; and in the maze of the modern world we would be as pilgrims without a guide, did we seek in our Lord for One whom we might in all things imitate. But, says the apostle else-

where, "we have the *mind* of Christ"; and, having that, we have a power within us that will satisfy every need and solve every problem. The apostle, who knew the frailty of the flesh as few have known it, could yet claim to have the mind of the Lord, and into possession of that mind he would urge us. And when we possess His mind, we will not imitate Him, because we will not need. Imitation is the insincerest flattery, the insincerest and the most indolent, for it is an appeal to externals, an appeal which it is the genius of Christianity to repudiate. Whatever we imitate, we betray.

At all times in the history of the Church, great religious movements, which had a noble passion at the heart of them, have fallen into ridicule and ultimate ruin, because they looked more to the manner than to the mind of Christ, more to the detail which changes with the changing age, than to the mind, which abides, renews and transforms.

But the dream, the imperative of the apostle, which thrilled while it seemed to mock us

—"have that mind in you"—has become in his own experience the soberest fact: "*We have the mind of Christ.*" In those two passages the Greek word and the context differ; but the thought in both is much the same, that we weak and erring men may have within us the mind of Christ, that mind which seeks not its own, which knows no doubt and no unrest. Then there would be no feverish, spasmodic yearning to imitate this or that, but a slow, sure, quiet transformation of ourselves and of the world by the renewing of our mind. To live within the mind of Jesus Christ, to have that mind live within us, to look out upon the world with the eyes of Christ, would be to see all nature melt into glory, resplendent with the love of God.

Had we but the mind of Christ, how beautiful upon mountain and meadow would the wild flowers be, each one of them fairer than Solomon in all his glory! How tenderly would we see the fluttering life of the sparrow to be upborne on the arms of eternal love! How pathetic would be the sight of men crowding



through the wide gate, and sauntering down the broad way that leadeth to destruction! How immeasurable would become the worth of the soul of every brother man, into whose eyes we looked with the eyes of Christ: of more value than many sparrows, yea, than the whole world! Had we but the mind of Christ, our hearts would fill with holy rapture at the vision of God.

"My God! how wonderful Thou art,  
Thy Majesty how bright!  
How beautiful Thy mercy-seat,  
In depths of burning light!"



**"O sing unto the Lord a new song."**



## A NEW SONG

An old song can always count upon a welcome, formal if not hearty. But a new song! Few have the courage to raise it, and many and loud and discordant are the voices that strive to drown it. The old songs are safe; they do not disturb the equanimity of the powers that be. To the majority a new song is a challenge to be answered by shouts if not execrations. At least such has been the reception which the religious world has usually accorded to new singers and their songs. Ears accustomed to celestial harmonies are chary of songs which might turn out to be earthborn. And wisely, for the new might be but a Siren voice which lures men to their destruction. But the present has its gracious and inspiring melodies, as well as the past, and he that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Once there came a Singer from heaven to

earth. He brought with Him a sweeter song than mortal ear had ever heard before. For He sang of a royal Father's love and pity for all His wandering children, and of a peace into which men might enter who would become as little children. One or two listened, and wondered, and followed. But the leaders of the Church would none of His song. It was too new, too strange, too improbable, too irritating, to those conventional ears. So they brought Him to a cross and howled at Him in His agony; and His new song was shouted down by a reckless rabble. "Away with Him, away with Him," they cried. And there the song seemed to end.

But it was too true to die. Soon it was taken up again by a bold, brave singer. Stephen felt, as few to whom he ministered, that the message of Jesus was indeed a new song, that it ushered men into a richer, freer, fuller world than that into which they had been born. But those who listened to him cared little for a message which denied their fancied prerogative, and which shook their conven-

tional belief in their Pentateuch. The song was new, and, therefore, heretical. They would not listen to one who spoke unconventional things about their Temple and their Bible, and the Jesus who was to change the customs which Moses delivered unto them. They had a rough and ready way of stopping the song. As he sang of the opened heavens "and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God, they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears, and rushed upon him with one accord; and they cast him out of the city and stoned him." Often in life, and sometimes in death, it has gone hard with them, those singers of the new song.

The singers might be slain, but the song could not cease. When Stephen died, "witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul," and the echo of Stephen's dying song lived in this young man's heart. He, too, came in the providence of God to see that men were not saved by the law of Moses, and that Jesus was the Saviour of the Greek as well as of the Jew. Simple truths to

us; but not simple, not even credible to the average man of that day, with his veneration for a misunderstood and misinterpreted past. So the great apostle is denounced as an arch-heretic, who "teacheth all men everywhere against the people, and the law." And there is great uproar in the Holy City, and the people run together, and some shout one thing and some another, but all alike agree in shouting "Away with him!" Then he begins his great defence. They listen with toleration while the notes are familiar; but when the first great unfamiliar note is struck, they reply to it with the shout of fiends, "Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live."

But no shouting of cruel or silly mobs can permanently stifle the song of God. On it rang, more or less clearly, down the centuries, till in a dark time it seemed as if all holy melody was dead. Then a mighty voice broke the astonished silence, proclaiming that the forgiving grace of God could not be sold by huckstering priests, but was free to every sin-



ner who would in faith and penitence accept of it. Not a few welcomed the voice as God's. But some were in perplexity, and the highest religious authorities were for stifling it in fire and smoke. "As the matter seems to me," said a merchant of those days, "Luther must either be an angel from heaven or a devil from hell." And the Papal bull declared that all his books should be publicly burned, and that "as a stiffnecked heretic, and a withered branch of the vine of Christ, he should be punished" with fire. The song was new; church and state must unite in suppressing it. It has ever been a crime to sing the new song.

May it not be that our days are cast in just such another epoch? Many workers in many fields have been patiently and reverently studying the ways of God. They have seen how like Israel was in language and religion to her neighbors, and yet how unlike; so unlike that only the finger of God could have shaped the difference. They have seen Israel take her place in the history of the great empires by which she was surrounded, and dark places in

her literature illuminated by the monuments of foreign kings. They have seen her religion purified by conflict and by revelation, so as to worthily prepare the way for Jesus. They have seen the increasing purpose that runs through all nature and all history. And now critics and historians, scientists and philosophers, smitten by the glory they have seen, are raising a new song to the Lord for the wonders He hath wrought. It becomes us to beware lest we be numbered among those who would have stoned Stephen, and shouted to Paul, "Away with him."

Every old song was once new: in time every new song will be old. Truth is truth before it is universally acknowledged. If there is danger in accepting that which is new, there is at least as much danger in rejecting it without examination: for we may thereby be found to be fighting against God. For any new light that He vouchsafes to our day and generation, we shall lift up united hearts of thankfulness to Him. As our souls rise on the visions of this book, with the new light of God upon it,

## **A New Song**

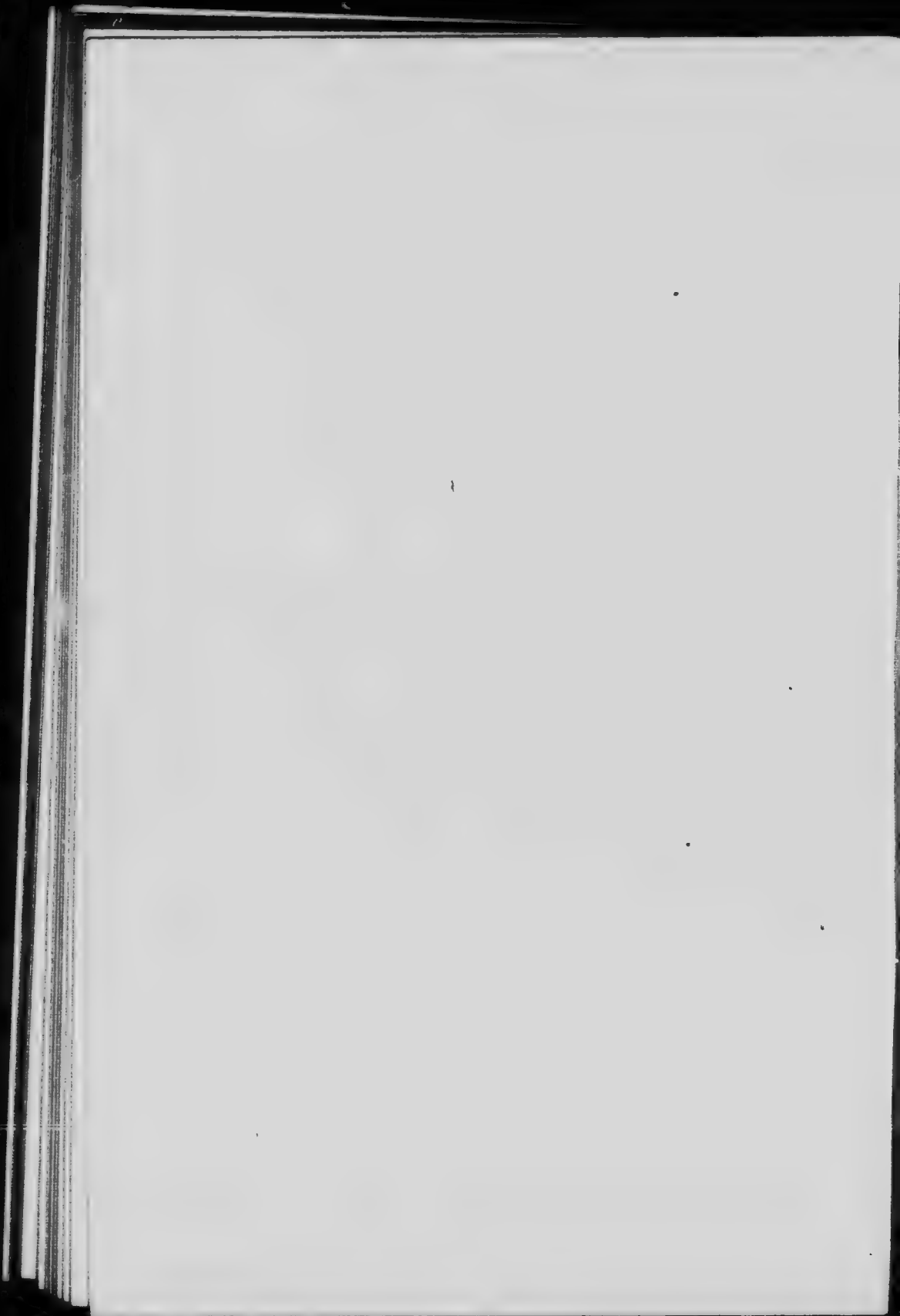
105

let us say with His ancient people, as they  
gratefully worshiped within the courts of  
their re-built Temple:

"O sing unto the Lord a new song:

Sing unto the Lord all the earth.

Let the heavens be glad and let the earth rejoice."



**"Solomon in all his glory was not  
arrayed like one of these."**



## ONE OF THESE

You cannot look upon a summer field or hillside—not, at least, if you have a heart at all—without thrilling in mysterious response to the gentle glory of the wild flowers which adorn it. But did you realize, as you looked, the debt you owed to each single flower, which lent its own separate glory to the total beauty that delighted you? In the field we must not forget the flower, for without the flower the field would not be what it is. Every flower has a life and history of its own, a life more real than that of the combination in which it stands. Every flower is clothed with a solitary glory of its own, which is more than a match for the most brilliant product of man's art. "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like *one* of these."

You go into a wood and listen with delight

and wonder to the shower of melody that pours down from countless tiny throats. You hear the harmony, but you do not think of the single strains out of which it is woven. Yet every little songster has a life of his own, joys and cares and a music all his own. Little worth he may be in the eyes of the world: two for a farthing. When one falls, nobody knows and nobody cares. Nobody but God; and He cares for everyone. "Not *one* of them shall fall on the ground without your Father."

The bird is more than the flower, for its life is richer. The child is more than either, for his capacity is all but infinite. He is made in the image of God. Out of his mouth may flow blessing or cursing. He has it in him to be angel or devil. A great gathering of innocent children may touch the eyes of a strong man to tears. But is it less than terrible to stand before a single child as father, teacher, pastor, and to feel that you bear upon your conscience the awful weight of his eternity? You may speak to thousands and but throw your words away. But whoso shall receive—and this



means loving, interested contact—*one* little child in Jesus' name receiveth Jesus; and whoso shall cause one of these little ones who believe on Him, in any way to stumble, by idle word or pernicious example, it were profitable for him that a great millstone be hanged about his neck, and that he be sunk in the depths of the sea.

But more than to the child does a strange significance attach to the sinner. As the years grow, innocence droops, perhaps dies. He who was but lately a child goes forth into the unfeeling world. Boldly indifferent to Christ's curse upon the tempter, someone causes him to stumble; or it may be the wild passions of his own heart. The power that is in him he has wielded for evil, and he falls. But he does not fall from the pity of God. In his loneliness he is remembered in heaven; and when he sets his face heavenward there is great joy there. For heaven knows, as earth can hardly know, the infinite value of a human soul. So "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over *one* sinner that repenteth."

Christ discovered the individual; let us see that we do not lose him again. His public work brought Him to the cross: His tender and separate dealing with the twelve, with each as best suited his nature, transformed them into men of invincible faith and courage, and insured for His gospel immortality. A woman at a well; a ruler by night; these were priceless opportunities to One who knew how dear to God was every being made in His image. The best and most lasting work is seldom, if ever, done in an appeal to the crowd: the effect is weakened because of the larger area over which it is dissipated. Men are not saved, any more than they are born, in crowds; they are saved one by one. Statistics do not count in heaven; there is joy there over one sinner that repenteth.

One of these! A lily of the valley, a bird on the wing, a little child, an erring man: all precious, because all share, after their fashion, in the love of God. It is He who clothes the flower with glory, and upholds the bird in its flight. It was the Son of His love who took

the little children in His arms, and gave His life at last for the ungodly. And shall we deny our pitiful measure of love to that which He loves so dearly—to the single soul, whose repentance would rejoice the angels of God? One of these little children who gather to our schools every day by the thousand, may profoundly affect the life and thought of his generation. One of these who vehemently deny their Lord, whether with oath or with argument, may yet, when he turn, establish his brethren. So we shall not despair of the smallest or the meanest. The very sight of them, with the thought of the unmeasured possibilities that lie before them, will urge us on.

On all who serve the kingdom of God, whether in church or state, in school or family, the knowledge of the value of the individual lays a tremendous responsibility, and carries with it as profound an inspiration. Would it not call out the best that is in us, and would we not serve with joy and trembling, and would not all our work gain in directness

and earnestness, did we allow ourselves to remember that every man, however worldly-minded or profligate, every woman, however frivolous or sunken, was infinitely worth the striving for, and that over even one such, redeemed from folly, there was joy in the presence of the angels of God? That schoolmaster must have put his soul into his work, who took off his cap to his boys every morning on entering school, "as God had perhaps destined some of the boys to be a preacher or a learned doctor." Of that true teacher we know nothing more than the name, Johannes Trebonius: one of his pupils was Martin Luther.

Those whose duty it is to address the crowd will remember that their work is less than half done unless it is inspired and followed up by earnest, pleading love for the individual soul. Those whose task is in the home—and this includes us all—will remember that there too, just where the responsibility is greatest, the opportunities are grandest. It lies largely with us to make the days of our dear ones bitter or glad. And shall we grieve or neglect

the immortal souls commended to our love by Almighty God? It lies wholly with us to direct the dawning intelligence of the little children towards the things of God, and to foster in our youths and maidens the love of good and the horror of evil. And shall we, by our lack of care or conscience, cause them to stumble? Better for us that a millstone were hanged about our neck, and that we were sunk in the depths of the sea.



**"Strong to apprehend with all the  
saints what is the breadth and length  
and height and depth, and to know the  
love of Christ."**





## WITH ALL THE SAINTS

In two ways does Christ give man his true place. He sets him alone beside God, as a son beside his Father, and shows him the inde-feasible worth of his own soul, worth potential if not actual; for do not the angels of God sing for joy over even one sinner that repenteth? But He also sets him in a fellowship. For with cords of love He has been drawing after Him, throughout the long centuries, a great multitude which no man can number; and all who are drawn of Him should have fellowship one with another. As I am bound by the tenderest ties to the God who created me for His service, and the Savior who redeemed me, so I am bound by bonds as strong as they are invisible to all who have ever loved the Lord and shared the redemption which He wrought. It is not good, it is not possible for man to be alone. To be alone is to die. We are born for fellowship; and our religion satisfies this

deep need of our nature by bringing us into a society, a kingdom, a church. We look into the friendly faces of those who worship with us, and we are strong.

The great apostle bowed his knees in prayer to the Father for a well-beloved Church, that she might be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that she might be filled unto all the fulness of God. Did ever so sane a man cherish an ambition so wild—"filled unto all the fulness of God?" Yet this ambition is not the extravagance of an over-wrought enthusiasm. The end is soberly set, and the means are adequate, because chosen in full view of the magnificence of the end. So noble a purpose demands for its fulfillment nothing less than all the spiritual force available; it may be accomplished only *with all the saints*. The heart leaps as the vision unfolds of the splendor of the destiny to which we are summoned, and of the goodly fellowship which presses on with us towards the

mark, and heartens us on the way by its strength, its experience, and its sympathy.

The richest individual life is poor in comparison with the manifold experience of "all the saints." Of the Churches which call themselves catholic, what can compare in catholicity with that which includes all the saints, and places at the disposal of every struggling soul for its guidance and inspiration, all the wise thoughts with which they have ever been visited, all the heroic endurance, even unto death, with which they have sealed their testimony, all their love, hope, faith, joy, triumph, all their vision of eternal things unseen?

All that is ours; and yet it is not ours. For we will not appropriate it. Saints of other communions and distant lands come and lay their treasures at our feet, and we will not stoop to pick them up, because they "follow not with us." The fellowship of the saints is larger than either our experience or our imagination of it. That fellowship knows no denomination: it includes all who aspire to apprehend the breadth and length and height

and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. Every saint needs every other, needs especially to supplement his own experience by experiences with which he is unfamiliar. His robust and practical piety may have to be softened into gentler lines of beauty by the unobtrusive grace more natural, perhaps, to another Church than to his own. The saint who dreams away his days in devout contemplation of the things above may have to learn from the saints of another Church that visions are for life, and gifts for service. We are debtors unto all the saints, especially unto those from whom we differ.

Each saint reflects the love of God, as the sparkles of sunshine upon the rippling sea reflect the brightness of the sun. Each dazzling wavelet reflects his glory, but all together do not exhaust it. One saint hears God in the whirlwind, another in the still, small voice. But neither can say to the other, "What need have I of thee?" for all have need of the heavenly voice, and must bid it welcome, whether it speak in thunder or in silence. There are saints

acknowledged and saints unacknowledged. But since fellowship with them is so vital to the fulness of our own life, shall we not at least—and that right early—enter into communion with those saints whose saintship is universally acknowledged? Do we often suffer our stifled, panting souls to be revived by the ampler air of the evangelists? Have we been long enough in fellowship with St. John to despise our worldly-mindedness, and to be overmastered by the thought of the exceeding love of God? As we look across our selfish lives, can we listen without a stricken conscience to St. Paul as he assures us that he will glory in nothing save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ? Have we learnt the terrors of the day of the Lord from fellowship with Amos or Zephaniah? or from Hosea the majesty of love? Our lives are so poor, because we have so little fellowship with these and other saints of the new covenant, and of the old.

Every Church has had her saints, and every epoch. It is for us to let them instruct and chasten us, counting nothing common or un-

clean. Our life will be the richer when we know the story of their struggles, our fortitude will be encouraged by the sight of their fidelity, our wisdom will be matured by the study of their meditations. All the saints belong to the whole Church of Christ; and that man robs himself of his inheritance who allows denominational jealousies or fears to govern the range of his sympathies. The streets of the city of God are exceeding broad. On them is room for the reconciliation of ancient enmities. Roman, Greek; Episcopalian, Methodist, Presbyterian; Rahab, Babylon; Philistia, Tyre, Ethiopia; Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God!

Every hymn-book is a testimony to our indebtedness to the saints. There all little rivalries are lost. Hebrew kings, German reformers, Roman Catholic priests, Episcopalian bishops, Methodist evangelists, Presbyterian ministers, have all conspired to make us their debtors. In their harmonious shout of praise all petty discords die. As we sing those hymns, we step into that shining fellowship,

from which no power can excommunicate us but our own little-mindedness and sin. We do not pray to the saints, as men once did; but we need them as sorely as ever, and must learn of them when and where we can. For they too knew the love of God; and it was for all the saints, and therefore for us too, that they wrought and spoke and wrote; for the love of God constrained them.





**"The eyes of them both were opened,  
and they knew that they were naked."**



## THE OPEN EYE

Whether the open eye be a blessing or a curse will depend upon the world upon which it is turned. For there are worlds and worlds. When God looked upon the world which He had made, He pronounced it very good, as every man must, too, who sees it as it is. But when man looks upon the world which he himself has made, he turns his eyes away with a shudder; if, that is, he sees it as it is. The gift of sight is in itself no boon; it is in the power of the devil to bestow. "In the day that ye eat thereof"—such was the promise of the serpent—"then your eyes shall be opened." And he kept his word; for their eyes "were opened, and they knew that they were naked." Their eyes were opened upon their own nakedness, shame, confusion, ruin.

The ambition to "see life" may be a noble one if cherished by a pure heart, honestly eager to learn the wonders and the ways of

God, or to know the mind and manners of men, that, so far as in it lies, it may refine that mind and purify those manners. But that same ambition has cost many a man his soul. There are men who think that to see life is to see sin, to come under the spell of the world's tawdry and evil splendor. The foul image of a poem, or the idle word of a friend who has just come from hell, reveals to us how blind we have been in the calm of our own domestic or social circle, and flashes upon us that great world of red passion, red not with the glow of health, but with the flare of the pit. A world of whose existence we had hardly dreamt, stands before us in all its baleful charm: in guilty delight we tremble as we gaze. We have sought knowledge and found it, and with it have found sure increase of sorrow. For, as our eyes are opened upon fascinating yet hideous possibilities, the peace and the purity which the children know take wings. We are left forever with tainted hearts and corrupted imaginations, and we curse the vision which blasted our faith in woman and in

man. Our eyes have been opened, but the sight has cost us dear. The eyes which open upon such a world close upon one of infinitely greater moment, open upon hell to close upon heaven and God.

Will any man barter the possession of a life so fair for the sight of one so foul? Into life's holiest hours he brings hateful and disturbing memories; into the brunt of its battle which can only be fought with a heart of hope, he carries crippling cynicism, if not deadly remorse. There is much in life on which a man must turn his back. But if he will see life, let him in fairness see the whole of it—not only the gilded sin on which he looks at the peril of his soul, but let him look too at the gracious charities of the home, at the uplifting and redeeming affection of man and maid for one another, at the uncomplaining generosity of some that are rich, at the silent patience of many that are poor, at the heroism of needy women and men in fierce temptation, at the slow, sure triumph of the Spirit of Jesus in the world.

Naked and not ashamed—that is the deepest depth of all; but the quest of forbidden knowledge which no pure man should have or even desire has done something for us, if it has shown us how naked we are. To face the brilliant sins of the city and not to feel the shame of them, to detect the subtle affinity of our own hearts for evil and not to recoil in horror from the tragedy which has already begun, is to stand perilously near the edge of the precipice, over which if a man stumble he may never rise again. But once his eyes have been opened, whether by actual sin or only by the vision of it, to see that he is standing on the edge of a horrible pit, into which a push from behind by an evil spirit, clothed, mayhap, in a garment of light, may hurl him irretrievably, he will, if he be wise, leap back with a cry and a prayer to the God of the little children that he will not suffer his foot to slide any more. "Their eyes were opened, and they knew that they were naked," and straightway they sought to cover their shame. There is hope for the man into whose cheek

the hot blush mounts when he stares face to face with the sin which has leaped forth from his inner life. And the horrid sight will bless him ere it go if it wake, as it can, within him the voice of conscience. For "they heard the voice of the Lord God, walking in the garden"—the very garden in which the taste of the forbidden fruit had opened their eyes to their own shame. That voice speaks in many ways, through visions heavenly and visions diabolic, summoning us now by the beauty of holiness, now by the loathsomeness of sin. If the sight of our shame quicken conscience, and thereby lead to repentance, it will have wrought within us a good work, which may in time prepare us for the beatific vision.

No man can at the same time see God and the world, any more than he can serve them both. He must choose. The devil never opens the eyes without, at the last, piercing the heart through with shame and sorrow, slaying its hopes, and blotting out its heaven. But blessed is the man whose eyes the Lord openeth. The vision of Jesus may at the first

strike us blind, as it did Saul of Tarsus—blind with sorrow and despair. But soon scales fall from the eyes that have been blessed by so gracious a visitation, and soon they shall see Him in His glory, willing and mighty to save. To look at Him with eyes that smile through tears of penitence, humility, and love is to be sure of His blessing; for "Blessed," said he, speaking of Himself and His work, "Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see." But he only can see Jesus who is intent on seeing nothing else, he whose heart is aglow with one great pure purpose, to keep himself unspotted from the world. Then allegiance is undivided and the heart is undistracted, and the eye is light; and the eye that is light shall see clearly, see through life and death, time and eternity, see man and Christ and God. "Blessed are the pure in heart; for *they* shall see God."



**"Jesus stood on the beach; howbeit  
the disciples knew not that it was  
Jesus."**



## THE UNKNOWN JESUS

Jesus is never far from those who love Him; and yet how very far He often seems to be! When we walk along perilous or sorrowful ways, we feel not always the touch of His hand. When the mists settle about us, we see not always Him who is the Light of all our darkness. Strange and sad it is, that Jesus the Saviour, Jesus the Lover of my soul, should be near me, sharing and supporting my life, and that I should so often think of Him as far, far away.

The pure in heart do not always see Him. Two friends walk by the way, and hold sweet, sad converse together touching the things that pertain to the crucified Lord of Life. A stranger joins them, and His words wake great thoughts in their hearts. The stranger is Jesus, and the men are lovers, almost worshipers, of Him. Yet they know not that it is

Jesus who has drawn near as they commune and question together: not even when He interprets to them, as He alone could, the things concerning Himself: not even when they constrain Him to abide with them, as the day is far spent. The Lord is in this place and they know it not. Tears of sorrow sometimes stand even in eyes that are given to watching for their Lord and hide from them the Saviour, whose gracious presence would have kept them glad, had they but looked on Him as He stood before them. On the Easter dawn, Mary beheld Jesus standing and knew not that it was Jesus. And, a little while after, on the break of another day, Jesus stood on the beach: and the disciples, who had companied with Him not one day, but many, knew not that it was Jesus. Sunken, like Mary, in our sorrow, or like the disciples, in the search for our daily bread, or like the sorrowful two on the way to Emmaus, in perplexed questionings, we are met by a figure which loves to meet the sons of grief and toil and doubt. But we do not see it; and if we did, only the

few would know that it was Jesus. So we miss the fellowship with Him, and miss with it the strength and the great and solemn joy. Never yet was deep sorrow or brave work or earnest speech but the unseen Jesus was standing by, with His gracious ministry of comfort and help and light.

Now the secret of our failure to recognize Jesus is in part this; we do not know how deeply He and His are one. They are in Him and *He in them*. Therefore it need never be hard and we need never go far to see Jesus. If the Jesus who continually makes intercession for us hath passed through the heavens, this same Jesus—for He is not divided—is in all His brethren, even in the least: Himself, and not another. Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest that we must ascend into heaven, that is, to bring Jesus down from above: for He is nigh thee, even in thine own brother. "I in him." Here is a vision of Jesus which the blindest may see; and the sight of a brother lays upon us the weightiest obligation that can lie upon

a lover of Jesus—to do for him what we would do for Jesus. To be cruel or harsh or even thoughtless to him is to persecute Jesus. Saul breathed slaughter against the faithful in the infant Church, and the glorious Jesus smote him with the soul-rending words which startled him into another life, "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." Jesus suffers in the sufferings of them that are His. Let us therefore take earnest heed lest we speak a bitter word of one who loves the Lord, or deal with him unkindly; for "inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto Me." We see one who looks like a gardener, and, Mary-like, we know not that it is Jesus. We may neglect or patronize him, as suits our mood; but we do not concern ourselves with him as we would with Jesus. So the vision comes and goes without blessing us, because of the blind eyes on which it has fallen. In every brother, be he gardener or artisan, we should discover not only an opportunity of service, but a vision of Jesus. "In the midst of you standeth one whom ye know not," without

## The Unknown Jesus

141

gifts of intellect or grace of form, but—mark it well—it is Jesus.

When the Lord seems far away, when we have no eyes for the Christ who visits us in every gracious thought and every stern experience, we shall not fail to find Him among His people. Two cannot talk in the house or by the way about the things of God, without being visited by Jesus. Most of all in the house of prayer may we look upon His shining face. "For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I."





**"Jesus answered, 'Are there not  
twelve hours in the day?'"**



## A TWELVE HOURS' DAY

What shall we say to our Lord, when He asks us, as He asked of old, "Are there not twelve hours in the day?" Shall those searching words not strike us dumb, as we think of the follies that fill most hours of every day? Are there twelve hours in any day, are there six, is there even one, of brave work or patient fidelity, of loyal service or strenuous endeavor, of resolute purpose or honest battle? Powers seen and unseen conspire to rob us of the hours as they slip by, and vigilantly must we buy them back from the callousness and sloth that would destroy us.

Every day, seem it long or seem it short, comes laden with its own twelve hours. How often has it to go away again, weighted with trifles and sighs, instead of with achievement that will endure, when "the fire shall prove each man's work of what sort it is." Every

living soul, however harassed by work or abandoned to indolence, has his twelve hours in the day, none more, none less; though in insight into their meaning and grasp of their possibilities, man differs from man as heaven from hell. Time hangs on the hands of some. So they say. Oh, mystery of mysteries! that, in a world where there is so much to do and know and fight and conquer, any man should think he had time enough and to spare. Others thrill on the threshold of a new day, as they that look for the salvation of God. They see in every hour a gift and a call; a gift to be used for growth in all that is worthy, a call to prepare for the rest that remaineth. No man can have more time than he needs; the longest life is not too long for the solemn tasks that are laid on every one. Nor is any man's day too short; has not God put twelve hours into it? and only for those twelve hours, though indeed for them all, will He call him to judgment.

"And if indeed there be twelve whole hours in the day," says the Sluggard, "may not one little hour be spared for folly?" Nay, verily;

for every hour has its own claims, and will bless us or curse us, according as we let it. The hour gone is like the word spoken: you cannot call it back again. Twelve winged hours came yesterday from God, and sped across our day, and hasted back to the God who sent them. Would we have blushed could we have listened to the tale they told Him? Did they tell of kindnesses undone, of passions unsubdued, of prayers unsaid, of holiness unsought? Or did they tell of temper sweetened, and sins slain, and graces won? Every day should build us up, set us higher, in faith or knowledge or power.

The tragedy of many a life is that time is not felt to be a trust; it is not seen to be the stage on which issues of eternal moment are wrought out. What are we doing with the hours to-day? They are bearing us inexorably on nearer to the night, when no man can work; are they bringing us nearer to God or to the outer darkness, where there is weeping? Do the days leave us better or only older? Are we drifting or marching? Are we

driven about by every wind of indolence or frivolity, or are our faces set steadfastly toward some good thing? Heaven aids the man who listens to the voices of eternity calling across the dull routine of daily toil. The sun himself stands still for all who will nobly dare in life's great battle for righteousness or man or God. The day will be long, and the sun will shine on brave and weary warriors and light them into eventide. In this light of God may we all walk and work and pray, not now and then, but the long day through. For are there not twelve hours in the *day*? and the night is coming

**"The night cometh, when no man can  
work."**





## THE COMING NIGHT

It was Jesus who assured us that God was the God of the living, not of the dead; yet it was Jesus who told us that the night was coming. In the glamour and fretful haste of the day, we too often forget the blackness of the night into which it is rushing, and thereby lose all the directness and concentration of aim, which would chase away the terror of the night when it falls. And yet terror there should be none; for in the beginning God ordained that in every night the moon and the stars should shine, and no night can be very dark into which Christ the Light has passed. Yet, with all its gracious possibilities, it is night that awaits us. The longest day dies into night, and though out of the darkness a new day will be born, yet that darkness is the grave of a day that is gone. Into the other world Christ looked with eyes that saw beyond the darkness, yet He felt

the awful power of the night that was coming. To Him the pathos of that night was not that it was dark, nor that it was long, nor yet that it was lonely, but that men could do no work in it. Into that night the workman cannot carry his tools, nor the writer his pen, nor the preacher his message. So, if we will not spend ourselves while it is day, we must lose ourselves and vanish into the advancing night.

Seeing, then, that the night is coming, what manner of persons ought we to be? Workers, says Jesus. It will be a solemn thing to walk through the lonely night; is it any less solemn a thing to stand within the sunshine and to feel it slipping from us moment by moment into twilight and evening? The day is ours, but not forever: "*while* it is day we must work; the night cometh." That is the logic of Jesus. The shortness of the day and the vastness of the work, and the inexorable stillness of the night strike us with such a sense of the frailty of man and the pity of things that we might well fold our hands before the mystery of life in reverent and submissive wonder. Not so

Jesus. He will not have us fold our hands, but rather grasp our tools, whatever they be, and work and work, with the awe of the coming night upon us.

And what an inspiration may be ours! Though this little life is hedged about by so much pathos, it may yet be very strong. For the work which Christ appeals to us to do is not left to our single-handed weakness or timidity. We are sustained by the example and the co-operation of a goodly fellowship, the goodliest and mightiest fellowship that ever banded together to cheer a fainting soul; no less a fellowship than God and Christ and all things. "For my Father worketh even until now," said Jesus—no night for Him—"and I work," and "all things" said His apostle, "work together." Was ever band of workers like this: God, His Son, and all His universe, working forever, working together, for good?

Should the thought of that magnificent, harmonious fellowship, whose work is from everlasting to everlasting, marching trium-

phantly on through the generations, not brace the weakest will, strengthen the faintest heart, nerve the slackest hands of men whose day at the longest is short and rounded with a sleep? So Christ's appeal is charged with all the forces of heaven and of earth, when He says, "We"—not I, as the Authorized Version has it—"we must work the works of Him that sent me." We—for He is not ashamed to call us brethren; and we, His brethren, *must* work. The divine necessity lies upon men whose hearts can be touched by an appeal of Christ, and by the weird power of the night that is coming to bring to an end all the work of the day, be it never so faithful and never so earnest. At the close of a life that seemed baffled, Jesus could say, "I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work Thou hast given me to do." And when our day is over and the night has fallen about us, will the work that was ours to do be done?

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**"I am come down from heaven."**



## THE DESCENT OF JESUS

There was a time when men were ambitious to scale the heavens. They sought to build themselves a city and a tower whose top would reach the sky. But that was when the world was young. Flung from the heights, not all too high, which they had won, they came to learn that if heaven and earth were ever to meet, heaven must come down, for earth could not rise.

A traveler lays down his weary head on a pillow of stone, and heaven is far enough away. Duplicity and ambition have all but broken the wings on which his soul might have soared away. Yet heaven stoops to him, if he cannot rise to her; and on a ladder of sorrow and silence the angels of God descend.

How men tremble with delight and hope when they see an angel of God descending! It is so to-day. It was so in the old world when, in the persons of Paul and Barnabas,

the gods seemed to the men of Lystra to have come down in the likeness of men. The people were wrong; and yet were they altogether wrong? For it is a godlike thing to descend; and the angels of God—then, and now, and evermore—come down in the likeness of men. Nay, did not Jesus Himself, being in the form of God, come "in the likeness of man"? History, so far as it has meant progress, has just been the descent of heaven upon the earth. If on one side it has been the effort of aspiring man, on the other it has been the grace of the condescending God. The renovated world seemed to the seer of Patmos to be just the Holy City "coming down out of heaven from God."

The Bible presents the vision of a possible ascent of man; it is still more the story of the descent of God. From the heights which it discloses God and His angels are continually seen descending for their beneficent work, now to rouse the conscience of those who have eaten of forbidden fruit, now to assure prophet or warrior of heavenly help.



But of all the strange descents of heaven upon toiling or disheartened men, surely none is so strange or so blessed as the descent of Jesus. Who may tell the heights from which He came? "I am come down from heaven." That is all He says. Majestic silence no less than majestic speech! He came down to a world worn by superstition and speculation, down to men out of whom the spirit had been crushed by oppression and priestcraft, down to "deep weariness and sated lust." And into this corruption and decay, heartlessness, indifference, despair, He brought life. The nobleman who said to Jesus, "Come down ere my child die," is but an emblem of that ancient world, voicing her own helplessness to heal her children, and uttering her great inarticulate cry to the Jesus who alone could save her from folly, shame, and suicide. Nay, is it not the cry of all the nobler spirits to-day, who look with sorrow upon a civilization that sends the weakest to the wall, upon a religion whose heart the Lord hath not touched, upon international friendships that are hollow, upon a stage that

is degraded and degrading? Those who have not let Jesus come down into their hearts know the distemper, but do not rightly know its cure. But surely the dumb voices of the people, if they could break through their perplexity and speak, would say, "Jesus, come down, ere we and our children die." Nothing but the Highest—and the Highest is Jesus—can save us. The Highest must stoop and lift us up or we shall die. "Jesus, come down."

But the Highest has stooped; stooped from the heights to the blackest depths. Jesus descended fearlessly into all the experience that has made men bitter and revengeful; into poverty, unpopularity, defeat, shame, death, till He reached that obedience and perfection, which can only be learned by the things which men suffer. The seeming descent was but the royal way to heaven. By coming down Jesus redeemed and transfigured our earthly life and made it possible for us to find our heaven in the depths as well as on the heights.

Jesus came down; and in any depths we shall find Him. Our doubts He meets with

His certainties; our worldliness He rebukes with His silent look of baffled love; our despondency He casts out by His revelation of a love that will not let us go; our orphaned hearts He heals by the visions of mansions where those that are lost to us are gathered together. And is all this nothing to you, O ye that pass by? He stooped to share all that vexes and tempts and hurts us. With such a fellowship in the depths, who can doubt or faint or fear any more? He descended into the lowest parts of the earth, lower than any other son of man has known or can know, and "He that descended is the same also that ascended." Shall we, then, who have had the glory of walking with Him in the depths, not also with Him "ascend far above all the heavens?"



**"Moses said unto God, Who am I  
that I should go unto Pharaoh?"**



## WHO AM I?

Every moment tests. But there come to most men supreme moments, when far-reaching decisions have to be swiftly made. And it is then, when we are surprised by a great opportunity which may cost self-denial and tears, it is then that we learn what manner of men we are:—whether we can bravely trust the voice which calls us and step out of our happy repose into a duty whose greatness appals us, or whether we have that more tragic courage to brave the ruin which one day is sure to overwhelm the man who disobeys the heavenly voice when it says, "Come now, and I will send thee." The sight of some great need which our hand or our voice might help to redress; of some great duty towards which an unseen hand has been leading us, though we knew it not till it was upon us; the eager voices calling from without, seconded by the

almost irresistible voice within; these are signs which a sober man will consider with trembling before he disobeys. For that is God's way of calling men.

Yet half in humility, half in terror, we fling back the unwelcome obligation which has disturbed us. "Who am I that I should go?" Nor need that be an unworthy cry. We hesitate, in part because we are not brave enough to obey, in part also because we are not sunken enough to ignore or reject outright a voice which might be God's. A base soul would not care, would hear no voice, feel no obligation, though it threw itself with all its might against him. In the reluctance and the self-distrust there lie the possibilities of victory. In such a mood if a man does not sink to despair, he will rise to indefatigable effort, it may be to a magnificent triumph. For the question "Who am I?" betraying as it does a consciousness of personal insufficiency, may lead a man to One that is higher than himself. He who asks such a question in sincerity has measured his own littleness against the majesty of the task which



summons him and has found himself wanting. No success is possible unless to him who feels that in his own strength it is impossible. It is the greatest who shrink.

But humility must be reinforced by faith and courage, or it is not only vain, but disastrous. If anything could be more tragic than pride, it is mistaken humility. The proud man injures himself; the victim of an exaggerated humility injures the world, by depriving it of the service he is fitted to offer. He misses his chance of laying a stone in the walls of the Eternal City, and lays up for himself remorse and sorrow. For the work which he has neglected is not only his, but God's. It was his blessed privilege to be, in some corner of the universe, the representative of the Most High God. And he has waived it aside, however sadly and sincerely, with the words, "Who am I?" But it is through the men whom He enlists in His service that God works upon His world." "I am come down." He says to Moses, "to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians." And soon

it becomes clear how He delivers. "Come now therefore, and I will send *thee* unto Pharaoh, that *thou* mayest bring forth My people."

Then if the work be God's, may not the workman count upon His help? In measuring the magnitude of his task, he must not forget the inexhaustible resources from which he can draw; and with such help, he need no more say to the duty which importunately pleads, "Who am I that I should go?" For that would be to forget and dishonor the God who has pledged His eternal word, "Certainly I will be with thee." Well might a mortal tremble and refuse, when summoned to appear before the terrible presence of Pharaoh; but not surely if he knew that behind and beside him was God.

If you are a brave and honest man, somewhere you are needed sorely. If you have not yet heard a call, one is sure to come some day, which will test whether your heart be cleansed of its conflicting purposes. Then some task, on which perhaps issues of great moment may

depend, will be let down to you from heaven, or will rise up at your feet and compel you to face it. Hard it may seem, inflexible as Pharaoh. You may have to leave all you love and risk your life for Jesus' sake in a foreign land. Or you may have to face the obloquy of society or the ruin of your popularity in denouncing some great wrong which is eating the heart out of the body politic or religious. Or you may have, under circumstances of peculiar delicacy, to offer a strong word of tender warning to one who is forgetting that there is a future and a judgment. Or you may have to confront an emergency which no one knows of but yourself and God, but which puts to the strain all the bravery and fidelity you have. That is your opportunity. It is also your peril. There you prove yourself a man or a coward: there you launch on a sea of service or you wreck. "Who am I?" you ask. This at the least: a servant who has heard clearly enough the call of his Master to go forth to that very work, the sight of which makes your heart faint and sore. Your disci-

pline has specially fitted you for it. You are not where you are for nothing.

No one but Moses could have faced Pharaoh; for no one was prepared and equipped as he. Had he fallen before his scruple the whole world from that day to this would have been the loser. He who does not emerge from the struggle with his selfishness and timidity a victor, is a ruined and remorseful man; he has lost his chance of making history. But against any Pharaoh the weakest may go with confidence when he sustains his heart by the divine assurance "Certainly I will be with thee." So he will bless the world and deliver his own soul.

**"If any man would come after me, let  
him deny himself."**



## THE DENIAL OF SELF

Do the great watchwords of the Christian faith possess and compel men as once they did? The faith that can remove mountains is not ours; the charity which was once the greatest of the three abiding things, has sunk to almsgiving; the denial of self, which is the royal road to the Kingdom of God, has become the denial only of certain things we love. How easy it is to drag down the soaring thoughts of Jesus, or St. Paul to our meaner level, and to empty noble words of their exacting and divine demands!

It is a commonplace that the Christian must *deny* himself; but it is not a commonplace that the Christian must deny *himself*. That which he is pledged to deny is himself. The thoroughness which the gospel imposes upon every man and in every sphere is as obligatory here as anywhere. The denial of self is apt to be

translated into terms of easier import. It is not the denial of certain pleasures, nor even of all, nor necessarily of any. It is the denial of the self that lies behind all pleasures and pursuits. It is the deliberate refusal to regard our individual life as a life with interests of its own, and the seeing of it only as an instrument of God and a contribution to His kingdom. It is the seeking first and always the Kingdom, never interests of our own, in the confident hope that all interests of ours worth conserving will find a place within it.

Self-denial is thus not doing without things, nor reducing life to a beggarly minimum. It is the unflinching surrender of self to the needs of the Kingdom and the call of Christ; such a spirit as breathed through the intrepid words of the apostle: "I hold not my life of any account, as dear unto myself, so that I may accomplish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus." Thus we belittle this great call of Christ to self-denial when we interpret it merely as a call to give up this or that. Doubtless that will be one of



its great effects upon us; and in that the world will find evidence that we have been with Jesus. But His call is infinitely more searching. It pierces to the heart and asks who has been denied there—self or Jesus? "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself." We cannot both follow Christ and assert ourselves.

There, then, is the secret of peace and immortality—to deal with ourselves, as the claims and problems of life arise, as if we had no interest to consider but Christ and the Kingdom. The beauty, the peace, the power of life, are withered by selfishness; and selfishness, let us remember, is a deeper and subtler thing than greed; it is the fatal temper that considers self. And this temper may reveal itself as tragically in abstinence as in indulgence. For if it be not for Christ and the Kingdom's sake that we abstain, it is for our own; and that is not the denial, but the assertion of self. Time was when men tormented themselves, and lashed their poor bodies, already worn with fasting and vigils, till the blood

came, thinking thereby to be doing God service. Is it not sad to think of so fierce an earnestness spent upon the mutilation of that wondrous temple of the living God? It was indeed, a holy impulse that drove men thus to mortify the flesh; holy but selfish. For, at the heart of it, was it not a wild terror that the soul that did not scourge itself into agony, would be lost?

Both for good and for evil, we do not to-day know so much of those deadly struggles, where a man who would win salvation, would wrestle with himself in deadliest grip, and resist even unto blood. But we vex ourselves in subtler ways. We fret about our scanty progress, our slender triumphs, our many defeats, instead of marching on after Christ into that larger life of service, in which love is all and self is forgotten. What is all our fretting but a more exquisite selfishness? Care can only be banished, and completeness come into the life, by a divine forgetfulness of self, and an uncompromising surrender to Christ, in whom alone we truly live.

But shall we not then, asks some strong and self-reliant one, be but phantoms of our real selves, when we yield up, without reserve or murmur, all that makes us what we are? Is that not to shrivel our personality? Shall we not be losing ourselves? We speak sorrowfully of the sacrifices to be made, comfort ourselves with the hope of a great reward, and resign ourselves, half regretfully, to the service which almost seems to cost too dear. "We have left all and followed Thee; what then shall we have?" Shame upon us that we speak of resignation—we that have been called out of the darkness and impotency of a selfish life into the marvelous light and power of a higher service, that elicits and develops all that is best in us and rewards us with fellowships an hundred fold in this life, and in the world to come life everlasting. In this surrender, we lose nothing—nothing but our own foolish selves, which we lose to find again in undreamt plenitude of power. He that so loses his life finds it—quivering with rekindled inspiration, purified, transfigured. If any man would follow Him,

and set his eyes steadfastly upon that shining figure going on before, he could not but forget and deny himself, and count all things but loss if so he might find Him.

Only the soul that denies itself enjoys that peace which passeth all understanding. How men spoil their lives by their dainty, and, as they deem, clever adjustment of interests—"some of self, and some of Thee!" If we could but learn to forget that we have interests of our own, or rather, could believe in our hearts that we have no real interests but in doing the will of God, how beautiful a peace might fill our lives! For want of this insight, Napoleon spent his latter days upon a lonely island, washed by the pitiless sea. When we stand at the parting of the ways, how easy it would be to choose, could we but consider ourselves as here only for the Kingdom's sake! Such a single-hearted soul would never come to cross-ways in his life. He could have no way which was not Christ's. His feet would always be on the tracks of the Shining One—that narrow way, but sure, that leadeth on to God and immortality.

**"A better country, that is, a heavenly."**



## ANOTHER COUNTRY

How lonely would life be without our dead! If they could pass from memory and imagination as they pass from sight, the fountain of many an inspiration would dry up, and many a life would wither. Often in the crowd their quiet faces look down upon us in gentle pity, bidding us be brave and worthy of the everlasting rest which now is theirs, and in the night watches, when all is still, their voices come back upon us with all the clearness of life, yet with the mysterious power of another world. The living we shall lose, but the dead we have found, never to lose again. Theirs is the peace unshaken, and the world that standeth fast. In communion with the blessed dead, we are lifted above the cares and confusions of this world into the realization of our citizenship in the Eternal City. They redeem life from its littleness by shedding upon it the

solemn glories of eternity. In their presence all passion dies; in their silent fellowship our hearts burn with holy yearnings; in that brief hour of unspeakable communion the world passes, and we feel what it is to stand within the halls of our heavenly home.

The world passes! But not easily; for its hold upon us is firm, and it bears us along with it. Late and soon, it is too much with us; and it is well it is needful to remember our dead. We go forth to our work until the evening. Our hands are full of toil, and our hearts of care. The claims and pleasures of the passing day drain all the energy and sympathy out of us. We become stolidly content with the friends about us and too easily forget those who have gone before. The dying request, the passionate farewell, the sunken, pleading eyes looking out already from another world, the low, broken words that were all but lost upon the straining ear; surely, surely, these moments and memories would belong to the things that abide.

Yet, is it so? If it were so, would men and

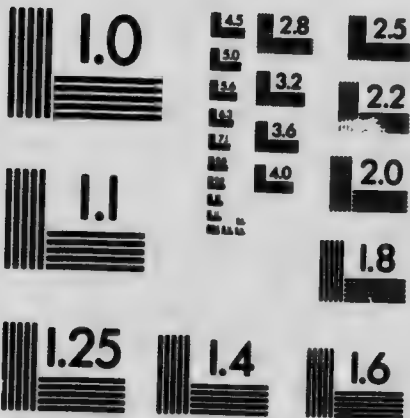


women be as they are? Would life be so passionless, duty so loveless, hope so dead? We have all lost, and in the loss we might all have won. But have we? We have all links that should strongly bind us to the eternal world; do we often feel thus bound or drawn thither? Is it less than tragic—the ease with which we forget promises the most solemn, memories the most sacred, scenes the most tender? The world smiles when our heart is breaking. But by-and-by we smile, too, with the world. And it is well: for Jesus came that our joy might be full, and that tears might be dried from the faces of sorrow. But is it possible that such an experience can leave an earnest man as it finds him? Can the other world thus look in upon him without touching him to awe? And ought not the awe which touched him to haunt him forever till he penetrates its secrets for himself? The deep experiences which might have chastened and ushered us into an ampler world impress us too often only as the ship impresses the sea. Forbid, O Lord! that we forget.



# MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART

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We forget, sometimes, because our natures are shallow and all experiences that do not touch our skin are lost upon us. Sometimes because the cares of the world and the struggle for wealth and the lusts of other things enter in and choke every influence and memory that would help to redeem us. Sometimes we forget because we are at no pains to remember. And this indifference costs us dear. We lose thereby our sense of perspective in life, thinking too highly of the things that are seen and too little of the greater things unseen. We lose that other-worldliness which imparts to character a tender and gracious beauty. We lose our familiarity with the facts which we ourselves shall have to face, and for which we need to prepare in meditation and silence.

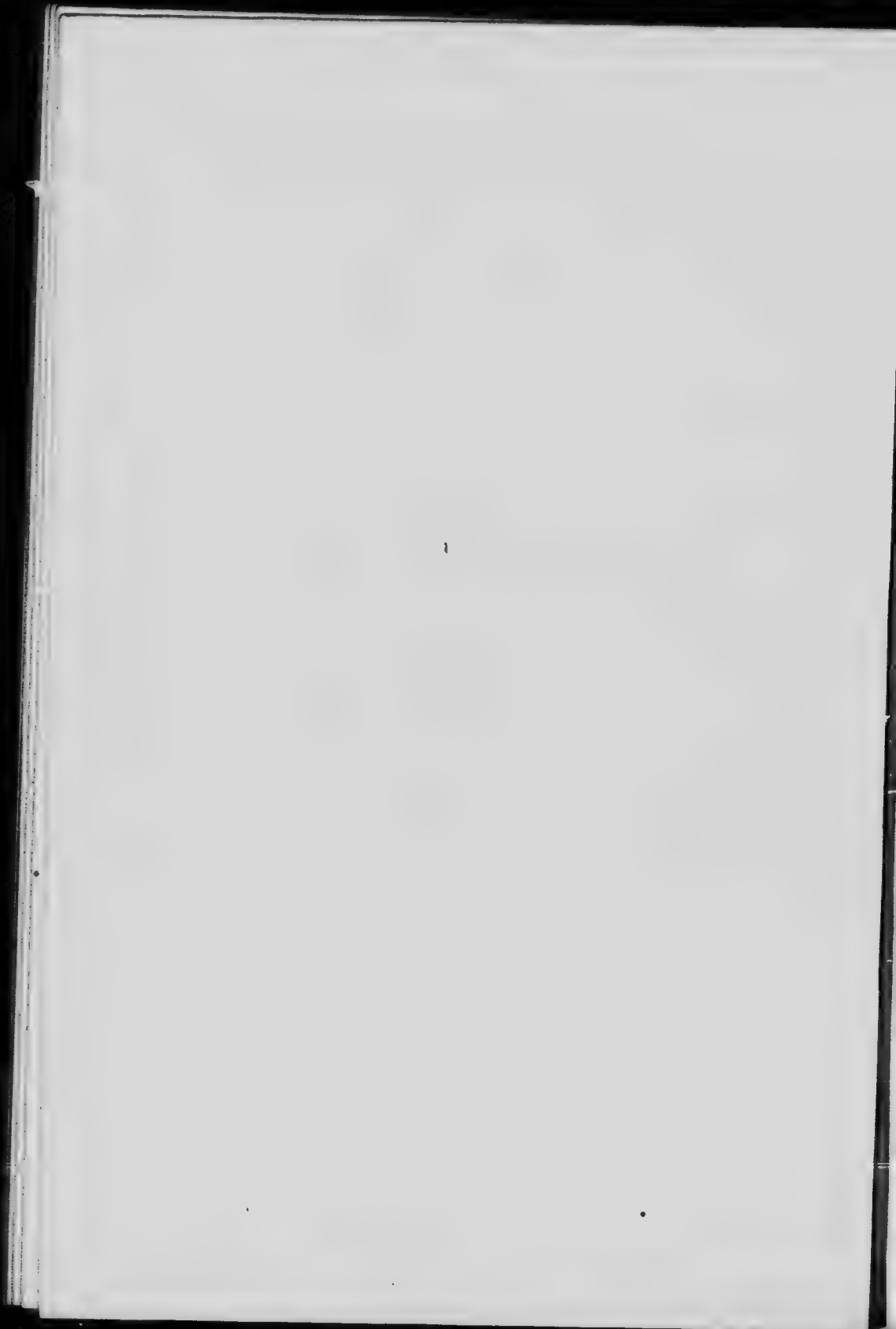
So we cannot live our highest life without our dead. The thought of them will possess us with the conviction of eternity and home. For here we are strangers and pilgrims, and as they that shift their tents in the wilderness; and we look across the dream of this life for a better country, that is, an heavenly, and for a

city which hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is God, and most of whose inhabitants are those whom we call the dead. Ours is the shadowland, not theirs. Ours is the world that shall pass; but theirs abides. For Jesus is alive for evermore, and all His people, the living and the dead, do live in Him.

Let us then join the Church of Christ throughout the world in commemorating the dead; all whose wisdom or courage or faithfulness yet speaks to us and blesses these our earthly days; and not least let us bear in mind and heart all with whom we ourselves ever took sweet counsel together, but who are with us no more. Let us touch again their vanished hands, and listen once more to the sound of the voices that are still. Those hands will not only beckon us but lift us above the dust and din into that peace which no ambition mars; those voices will be to us as the music of the angels of God. Thus heaven will be near, and life will be great, and death will take us home.



**"If the foundations be destroyed."**





## SHATTERED FOUNDATIONS

"If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" Such words rise too easily to the lips of men who stand before the threatened ruin of the faith they love. Strong, clear faith never asks such a question; nor yet that other question which more adequately represents the Hebrew words of the Psalm, "If the foundations be destroyed—what has the righteous done?" that is, what will he, with all his righteousness, be found to have accomplished? It is not a question which a good man puts to his own heart, as he looks out in despair upon times full of confusion and skepticism. It is the cowardly cry of men who prefer safety to struggle, ease to strenuousness, flight to opposition. "Flee," says the coward, "to the mountain as a bird. For see! the wicked are bending the bow, they have already set their arrow on the string, to shoot in the dark at the

upright. If the foundations be destroyed"—this is the crowning argument for flight—"what has the righteous accomplished? His struggle has been in vain." The dangers and the futility of opposition are painted vividly enough; but they do not terrify the imagination or shake the faith of him who puts his trust in God. He flings back the cowardly challenge with triumphant defiance. "The Lord is in His holy temple. The Lord—His throne is in heaven. . . . He will rain upon the wicked coals of fire and brimstone . . . The upright shall behold His face."

Here is a soul delivered by her clear-sighted faith from her wrestlings with temptation, comforted by the assurance that, despite all wrong and confusion, there is justice in heaven, which will swoop down upon the world of wickedness on the wings of elemental powers; and she is strengthened to bear what must be borne in the sure hope that the pure in heart shall look upon the face of God. What is it to such a soul that earthly foundations seem to quaver? Heaven standeth fast with

its justice and its God, whose eyes watch all that men do evermore. Evil cannot touch Him whose weapons are the elements, fire and brimstone and glowing wind, neither can it touch those who put their trust in Him. To the counsels of cowardice the Psalmist replies with his answer of faith, "The Lord is in His holy temple. The Lord—His throne is in heaven." What to him were the mountains who had heaven and its Lord for his refuge? What were bows bent by the wicked and arrows set upon the string for their cruel flight, to him on whose side fought the God of the storm? What was the darkness that seemed to shield schemes of wickedness, to him on whom streamed light from God's own face? What was the seeming shattering of foundations to him whose foundation was God?

It is an ancient struggle that of faith with despair. But those who have named the name of Christ are bound by the love they bear Him to look upon their victory as certain. How foolish look the bows and arrows of men when matched against the lightning and the thunder-

bolts of God! Good men need never tremble for the foundations. The only foundations for which they need greatly care are indestructible, sure and eternal as God. Once and again has it seemed as if the faith which is dearer to many than life were to be shivered by the sharp swords of persecution or by the deadlier assaults of speculation. And once and again has God shown Himself in His heaven, fulfilling His word sometimes by fire and hail and stormy wind, sometimes by the words of men who brought the world back again to truth and peace.

The foundations are laid deep; neither man nor devil can reach them. All that God builds is built upon a rock. Rains may fall and floods may come and winds may blow, but they only show how strong is the house of God's building. The fury of hell will lash itself in vain against Christ's Church; for He built it upon a rock. When foundations are shattered, it is time that they were removed; for not on such can men build for eternity. We with our immortal souls must see to it that we build

upon unassailable foundations. And see! the work goes on apace. Gaze long enough at the ruins which fill the world and all but break the heart of Hope herself; and rising above them, behold! the shining walls of the city of God, behold! the city, with her bulwarks, and her people and her King. It will be time enough for the righteous to despond when the foundations begin to tremble. But neither in this nor in any other world can such a thing be. For they are eternal as the love of God, deep and broad as the grace of Christ. When the foundations seem to reel, it is not they but we who are reeling. Our faith is not rooted and grounded, if the tempests of social revolution or the storms of criticism can so lightly sweep it away. Do we doubt the foundations, and do we fear for the fate of the righteous? Then men are mightier than God, and God cannot take care of those who love Him, and of the cause that is His, and He is not the Father Almighty.

The foundations of the Christian faith are buried deep in the facts of history—in the im-

mortal message of the prophets, in the life and death and resurrection of our Lord, in the rapid and manifest triumph of His gospel. The voice of history, as well as of the Psalmist, proclaims "The Lord is in His holy temple. The Lord—His throne is in heaven." And Jesus Christ, we believe, is sitting at His right hand. Can then the future be a terror when the past has again and again seen our faith victoriously meet shocks the most furious and cruel, and when all power in heaven and *on earth* has been given to the Lord in whom we trust? I believe and am persuaded that the foundations shall abide.

**"Goodness and mercy shall pursue  
me all the days of my life."**





## THE DIVINE PURSUIT

God is the same forever; but that sameness is neither monotonous nor passionless; it is the constancy of a sleepless enthusiasm for men. "Goodness and mercy shall *pursue* me," says the Psalmist. God's love is earnest, as earnest as the deadly battle-hate—for the Hebrew word means that. He pursues us with the zeal of a foe, and the love of a Father; pursues us "throughout the length of days" with a divine impatience that is never faint and never weary. He is not content to follow us; He pursues us, because He means to find us. Behind the loneliest man is a lovely apparition; nay, no apparition, but angels twain, Goodness and Mercy, shielding and urging him on. Will he not turn round and look at them? For not to smite, but to bless, are the hands uplifted behind him. Had the powers that pursue us not been goodness and mercy, they

would have slain us long ago, as cumberers of the ground.

Every morning we open our eyes upon a world flooded with God's light and laden with His bounty. He pursues us through the troublous cares of the day into the quiet slumberland, where care is forgotten; pursues us week by week through the harsh claims of a noisy world till, on His own day, he sets our feet within the courts of His house among the great congregation; pursues us over lonely ways marked by the graves of those we love, and up steep hills of sorrow, to the heights where only His pure breezes blow, and whence we can see—not very far away—the radiant city that abideth and our lost alive for evermore. He has tracked us across the desert of the dying year, and His gracious hand is now upon us in the glad Christmas time. We are where we are to-day because of the babe who was wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger.

Dear and fair had God's mercy been to the men of the early times; still more dear and

still more fair did He make it in the urgency of His pursuit of men. He so loved the world that He sent goodness and mercy incarnate in His Son, who dwelt among us, and won the worship of all earnest hearts, and with gentle power is drawing us to Himself to-day, as we think of Bethlehem. He for whom there was no room in the inn brought *us* into a wide place: into a wider faith in the goodness and mercy which pursue us, into a life more abundant and a fuller joy. The sight of Him, the words of Him, lift us up into quietness and confidence in face of doubt and fear and death, and fill the unknown world beyond with glory. In Him we have all things, peace, strength, heaven, fellowship with the saints on earth, and in glory everlasting; in Him we see how earnest is God's pursuit of us. But His quest of us must be answered by our quest of Him. "Let *us* follow on," says the prophet of God's love, "to know the Lord"; let us *pursue*—for that is the word here too. Would we be truly God-like we must pursue as He pursues, following in the footsteps of Christ, till at the last He

sets us at God's right hand. He in quest of us and we of Him, shall surely find each other.

**"Isaac went out to meditate in the  
field at the turning of the evening."**



## THE TURNING OF THE EVENING

Long centuries ago a man "went out to meditate in the field at the turning of the evening." His heart was full of thoughts both sweet and sad. His mother was dead, and his bride was coming; she was nearer than he knew. He looked down the long vista of an untried experience, and before stepping into it he went out to meditate.

Upon us has come another evening, the evening of the year's long day. We stand within its swiftly-deepening shadows, and thoughts enough should possess our hearts, ere we trust ourselves to look upon the dawn of a new day. It becomes us, too, to go out; out of the glare and babble within the walls, out to the silence and to God, there and before Him to meditate. The most fatally reckless thing that any man can do is not to meditate at the turning of such an evening. For surely, and it may be

swiftly, will descend upon us all another and a darker night, and then it will be too late.

How strange and lonely to watch the long day dying, and to look out from the creeping shadows across the way that it has come! Go out by yourself. It is so still that you can hear the echo of the faintest footfall, and the sound of voices that you thought were dead. Listen! and across the quiet air will float words that will startle you, your own angry words hurled in haste, and fraught with sorrow for the hearts on which they fell. And other voices there are, vows that you made in the joy of your heart, born in enthusiasm, only to vanish when the love grew cold. How sad and mocking are their echoes now! Yet other voices break the stillness—strong, helpful words of heaven-sent friends, and of Holy Scripture, and gracious words of Jesus and His earthly ministers, spoken from week to week in love, that might have blessed and lifted up your life. They too are forgotten, and the dim, confused echo comes back to upbraid you. O Lord! as we listen, our hearts



## The Turning of the Evening 205

accuse us. For the hasty word and the broken vow, and the neglected message, forgive when Thou hearest us, O Lord!

The night is growing darker, and we are alone. Yet we feel that there are presences about us, some beautiful as the dawn, some foul as hell. Look! There, in all their loveliness, stands many a forgotten blessing. Long ago they visited us like angels. We prayed for them: and when they came, we thought we must constrain them to abide with us forever—so dear were they. But day by day their faces grew familiar, and our eyes were holden that we saw no angel there. But now these angel faces shine through the night upon us; and we ask ourselves in sad wonderment how we could have forgotten a vision so fair.

But let me look again! Beside the disappointed angels stands a dark and awful figure, and looks in upon me with its mocking eyes. Surely I have met that face before, not many months, nay, not many days ago. Ah me! It is myself. Oh, the light of red passion that leaps from those eyes, and the cross purposes

that I know to have darkened that heart! Oh, the cruel, relentlessness with which I—for that is I—quenched the pleadings of the Spirit, and the hypocrisy of that smile, which the world mistook for kindness. And now dost thou come in the dark to torment me? Oh, save me from myself, good Lord! if that be verily myself. Save me, for Jesus' sake.

For there, beside that guilty thing from which I shrink in terror, stands Jesus as He has often stood before. Yes, often He came in the bright hours of the day. But I was strong and careless; and the sun was shining. Pride ruled my will, and I did not know how poor I was without Him. He came, too, in my sorrow and in His blessed sacrament; but, when sorrow and sacrament were over, I left Him. And, now that I am all alone, He is come back with those soft, kind eyes of His.

With Him all night I mean to stay,  
And wrestle till the break of day.

My meditation is more sad than sweet as there pass in solemn procession before me the wrongs that I have done, the blessings that I

## The Turning of the Evening 207

have rejected or forgotten. And I leave my place in the darkness with a deeper sense of my need of the everlasting God and of the Good Shepherd of the silly sheep. I pray that He may purify me by this vision of the night, and make me more worthy of the virgin year with which He seems in His grace to be about to bless me. And when for me the last night falls, may I wake with Him on the break of the everlasting day!

**Almighty and most merciful Father,**

WHO HAST GUIDED OUR STEPS ACROSS ANOTHER YEAR, WE BOW BEFORE THEE IN SOLEMN GRATITUDE, AS WE CALL TO MIND THY MANIFOLD MERCIES, OF WHICH WE HAVE BEEN SO UNWORTHY. WITH FULL HEART WE BLESS THEE FOR ALL THE VARIED DISCIPLINE BY WHICH THOU HAST WITH PATIENT LOVE BEEN PREPARING US DAY BY DAY FOR THINE EVERLASTING KINGDOM: FOR ANY JOY THAT RENEWED OUR HOPE AND STRENGTH, AND FOR ANY GRIEF THAT HELPED US TO FEEL THAT HERE WE ARE BUT PILGRIMS AND STRANGERS. THY GRACIOUS HAND HAS BEEN UPON ALL OUR LIFE. SURELY THOU HAST CROWNED OUR YEAR WITH THY GOODNESS, AND OUR PRAISE SHALL BE OF THEE.

WITH SORROW AND PENITENCE WOULD WE CONFESS THAT OUR SIN HAS BEEN EVER BEFORE US. OUR FEET HAVE NOT BEEN SWIFT TO RUN IN THE WAY THAT LEADETH UNTO LIFE: OUR HANDS HAVE NOT BEEN WILLING TO DO THE WORK

WHICH THOU HAST GIVEN THEM TO DO: NOR HAVE OUR HEARTS BEEN CLEANSED OF THEIR EVIL AND SELFISH PURPOSES. HAVE PITY UPON US, WHOM THE YEARS CARRY AWAY AS WITH A FLOOD. HAVE PITY UPON US, O FATHER, THOU WHOSE YEARS KNOW NO END, AND LET NOT THY KINDNESS DEPART FROM US; FOR IN HUMILITY AND HOPE WE WAIT FOR THY SALVATION.

OPEN OUR EYES TO SEE THY MOST BLESSED WILL, AND MAY WE FIND THEREIN OUR PEACE. AS THE SHADOWS OF THE DEPARTING YEAR GATHER ROUND US, WE WOULD FEEL THE COMFORTING AND REASSURING TOUCH OF JESUS' HAND. THROUGH ALL OUR LIFE MAY HE LEAD US STEP BY STEP, TILL HE BRING US AT THE LAST INTO THAT WORLD WHICH IS ALL LIGHT AND IN WHICH IS NO DARKNESS AT ALL. FOR HIS OWN NAME'S SAKE. AMEN.